

# **CHARNWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **Open Spaces Assessment Study**

**Final Report**

**December 2017**



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## INTRODUCTION

Charnwood Borough Council requires this Open Space Assessment Study to assess the existing provision of open space in Charnwood, building on, and updating a previous study published in 2010, but also having regard to changes in national planning policy. The study makes an assessment of future needs within the timescale of the new Local Plan to 2036.

The findings and recommendations will:

- Provide a robust evidence base for strategy development, including for the proposed refresh of the Open Space Strategy 2013-2028.
- Support the drafting of planning policy for the Charnwood Local Plan.
- Determine future provision needs (e.g. protection, enhancement, surplus to requirements).
- Inform the determination of planning applications.
- Prioritise Charnwood Borough Council's and its partners' capital and revenue investment
- Help understanding of local priorities for open space needs to better inform the negotiation of Section 106 Agreements.

The Charnwood Open Spaces Strategy 2013-2028 uses the Government definition of open space, and this has been carried forwards in this study:

Government guidance defines open space as: *“all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can also act as a visual amenity”*.

The 2013 strategy notes that:

*“Parks, natural spaces and other types of open space do not exist in isolation but make up the green infrastructure of the Borough. Green infrastructure is the physical environment within and between urban areas. It is a network of multi-functional open spaces, including formal parks, gardens, woodlands, green corridors, waterways, street trees and open countryside.”*

The study uses well established categories of open space which originated in earlier national planning guidance (PPG17). These are:

*Figure 1: Open space typologies*

Parks and Gardens	These range from major parks to small memorial gardens – often used for informal recreation and community events. These may include paths, benches, footpaths, tree and shrub planting, formal gardens, close mown grass for ball games / picnics etc, play areas, facilities for young people, and toilets.
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	Examples of these sites include: Queens Park, Loughborough and Deville Park, Syston.
Amenity green space	Most commonly found in housing areas. Includes informal recreation green spaces. Used for informal activities close to home or work, children's casual play, enhancement of the appearance of residential areas. Examples include: Cumberland Road, Loughborough and Long Furrow, East Goscote.
Natural and semi natural green space	These include publicly accessible woodlands, as well as urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (e.g. commons, meadows), wetlands and wastelands. Uses include wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness. A high proportion of these will be in the countryside rather than the urban areas. These sites include the country parks such as Bradgate Park, and smaller sites such as Morley Quarry in Shepshed.
Children and young people's facilities	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children below age 12, specifically designed as equipped play facilities.  And  Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving young people aged 12 and above, specifically designed for use by young people (e.g. youth shelters, skateboard parks etc).
Allotments, community gardens and urban farms	Sites laid out for people to grow their own vegetables, fruit and flowers as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.
Cemeteries & churchyards	Including closed churchyards or other burial grounds.
Green corridors	Linear routes with a primary purpose of providing opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel, and include towpaths along canals and riverbanks. Examples include: Soar Valley Canal Corridor and Ashby Road, Loughborough.
Civic spaces	Including civic and market squares and other hard surfaced community areas designed for pedestrians. The primary purpose of civic spaces is the provision of a setting for civic buildings and together with village greens also offer space for public demonstrations and community events etc and can often define the character of the local environment. Examples include: Market Place, Loughborough and High Street, Quorndon.

## SECTION 1: SUMMARY OF THE METHODOLOGY

1.1 The starting point for the sites list for the study was the evidence informing the Open Space Strategy 2013-2028 which was produced in 2010. The following criteria were agreed as the typologies to be included.

Open Space Typology	Criteria
Parks and Gardens	All sites
Natural and semi-natural green space	Only include where these have a clear recreational function, are part of public open space and are at least 0.2ha in size.
Amenity green space	Minimum size 0.2ha unless there is a clear recreational function e.g. children's play. Includes informal unequipped play and kickabout areas.
Green corridors	All sites
Children's Recreational Spaces	All sites excluding Local Areas for Play (LAPs).
Young Person's Recreational Spaces	Open access Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs), teenage shelters, skate parks, outdoor basketball etc.
Allotments	All sites
Churchyards and cemeteries	Assessment in relation to open space criteria.  Consultation questions for parishes on the stakeholder survey about the capacity of the existing churchyards and cemeteries to meet future needs.
Civic spaces	Agreed list of civic spaces including registered village greens

### Assessment templates and sampling

1.2 The detailed assessment criteria for each typology was agreed with Charnwood Borough Council (CBC), and site sampling was undertaken involving CBC, the site auditor and support team from Nortoft. This was to ensure that the site audits would be consistent with CBC expectations. All of the site auditing was undertaken by a single highly experienced consultant in order to ensure consistency of approach.

### Confirming the sites pre-audit

1.3 The following steps were followed to update the previous sites list for auditing:

- Desk based assessment of the GIS layer of all sites and typologies provided by CBC, to amend/reclassify to new typologies and amended scope.
- Consultation with the Parish and Town Councils and Ward Councillors in Loughborough to identify any changes in their areas.
- Updating of the sites database in response from the consultation feedback.

## Auditing

1.4 Each site was assessed during late July/early August 2017 against the agreed templates (details provided in Appendix 1) and the majority were photographed to confirm site quality and any issues identified in the assessment. Due to child protection issues and actual presence on some sites of children during the time of the audit, there are a small number sites, which were not possible to photograph.

## Consultation

1.5 Consultation about open spaces included:

- An individual online survey, running from 5<sup>th</sup> May 2017 to 31 August 2017.
- The parish/town council, and Loughborough ward councillors survey.
- Key stakeholder responses.

1.6 The generic findings from these consultations are provided in Section 4 of this report. The individual survey resulted in 258 responses and the findings can be used as a valuable resource to confirm the key issues, and criteria for standards.

1.7 Of the parishes and town councils, there was some response from 22 out of the 34 councils. There was a lower response rate for Loughborough wards. The key issues emerging from this consultation are a noted lack of allotment space and those that are available are sometimes poor quality. A desire for more natural greenspace and some requirement for more children's play. There are a small number of potential projects linked with open spaces.

1.8 The parishes and town councils were also asked about the capacity of their burial space. The results of the survey are provided in Appendix 2 of this report.

1.9 A wide range of key stakeholders were contacted about the study. Organisations were asked to respond on policy and site specific issues, and also to promote the individual survey to their membership. The only responses received were from Natural England who recommended testing and use of their Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt), and the Canal and River Trust who requested that any local actions / projects which impact on the canals or the towpaths to be discussed with them at an early stage.

## Site lists

1.10 The final sites list (post audit) was agreed with CBC officers in September 2017 and this is the basis for the assessment.

## Assessment

1.11 Each open space typology has been assessed against the currently adopted standards, developed from the 2010 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study. The

assessment includes tests for quantity, quality and accessibility against the existing standards. Further testing has then been undertaken where it appears that the existing standards require to be updated. The recommended standards then emerge from the testing for each of the typologies.

1.12 There is great variation in the application of walking times and distances between local authorities nationally as different distances have often been used for the same travel times. Existing standards for both Charnwood and other comparator authorities used within this study also show alternative distances for the same travel times. To avoid confusion, this study uses the Fields in Trust recommended walking time catchments (Fields in Trust, 2015) as follows:

400m = 5 minutes' walk  
800m = 10 minutes' walk  
1,200m = 15 minutes' walk  
1,600m = 20 minutes' walk

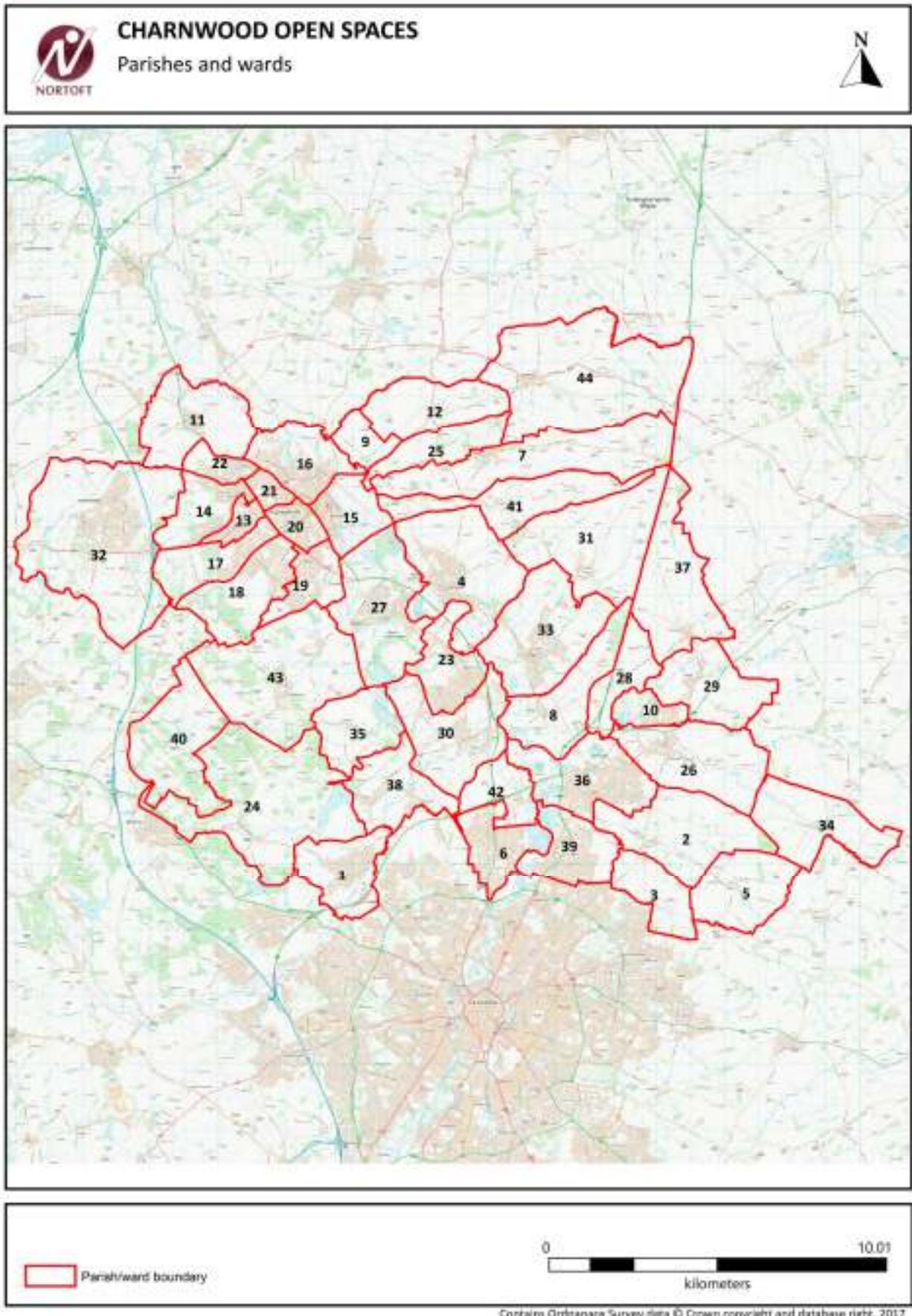
1.13 Both the existing and proposed standards for open space have been tested for all parishes as well as wards in Loughborough.

1.14 Standards are based on a provision per 1000 people therefore the population of each parish/ward is needed to enable the testing to be completed. The most recent population data for parishes is from the 2011 census and this has also been used for the Loughborough wards.

1.15 There is an overlap in area between Hathern Parish and Loughborough Dishley and Hathern Ward. However, as the data for both parishes and wards is from the 2011 census, the ward boundary has been amended to only include the Dishley area (Figure 1). The population has also been adjusted to match this.

1.16 In addition, the 2011 census data does not have any population figures for 4 parishes in Charnwood: Cotes, Barkby Thorpe, Prestwold and Ulverscroft. As these parishes do not contain any open space typologies which have either existing or proposed standards, this has not impacted the open space testing.

Figure 2: Parishes and wards in Charnwood



Key to sub areas map:

Parish/Ward name	Map ref	Parish/Ward name	Map ref
Anstey CP	1	Mountsorrel CP	23
Barkby CP	2	Newtown Linford CP	24
Barkby Thorpe CP	3	Prestwold CP	25
Barrow upon Soar CP	4	Queniborough CP	26
Beeby CP	5	Quorndon CP	27
Birstall CP	6	Ratcliffe on the Wreake CP	28
Burton on the Wolds CP	7	Rearsby CP	29
Cossington CP	8	Rothley CP	30
Cotes CP	9	Seagrave CP	31
East Goscote CP	10	Shepshed CP	32
Hathern CP	11	Sileby CP	33
Hoton CP	12	South Croxton CP	34
Loughborough Ashby Ward	13	Swithland CP	35
Loughborough Garendon Ward	14	Syston CP	36
Loughborough Hastings Ward	15	Thrussington CP	37
Loughborough Lemington Ward	16	Thurcaston and Cropston CP	38
Loughborough Nanpantan Ward	17	Thurmaston CP	39
Loughborough Outwoods Ward	18	Ulverscroft CP	40
Loughborough Shelthorpe Ward	19	Walton on the Wolds CP	41
Loughborough Southfields Ward	20	Wanlip CP	42
Loughborough Storer Ward	21	Woodhouse CP	43
Loughborough Dishley	22	Wymeswold CP	44

## Comparator authorities

1.17 In relation to comparator authorities, it is appropriate to use the CIPFA ‘Nearest Neighbour’ model. This was developed by CIPFA (the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) to aid local authorities in comparative and benchmarking exercises. It is widely used across both central and local government. The model uses a number of variables to calculate similarity between local authorities. Examples of these variables include population, unemployment rates, tax base per head of population, council tax bands and mortality ratios.

1.18 The local authorities that are ‘similar’ to Charnwood are: Broxtowe, Colchester, Huntingdonshire and Stafford.

## SECTION 2: OPEN SPACES ACROSS CHARNWOOD

- 2.1** There are a large number of open spaces across Charnwood with different primary purposes, including country parks, amenity green spaces, children’s play, allotments and green corridors. All of the open space typologies assessed in this study are mapped district-wide in Figure 5, which provides a valuable overview of the extent and purpose of the existing open space network.
- 2.2** Appendix 3 provides a series of maps which provide a more detailed overview of the open spaces provision across the borough by settlement. Appendix 4 shows the proposed accessibility standards for the Towns, Leicester Principal Urban Area and the Service Centres.
- 2.3** The total area of open space identified in the audit is shown below along with the current level of provision per 1000 population.

*Figure 3: Current levels of open space by typology*

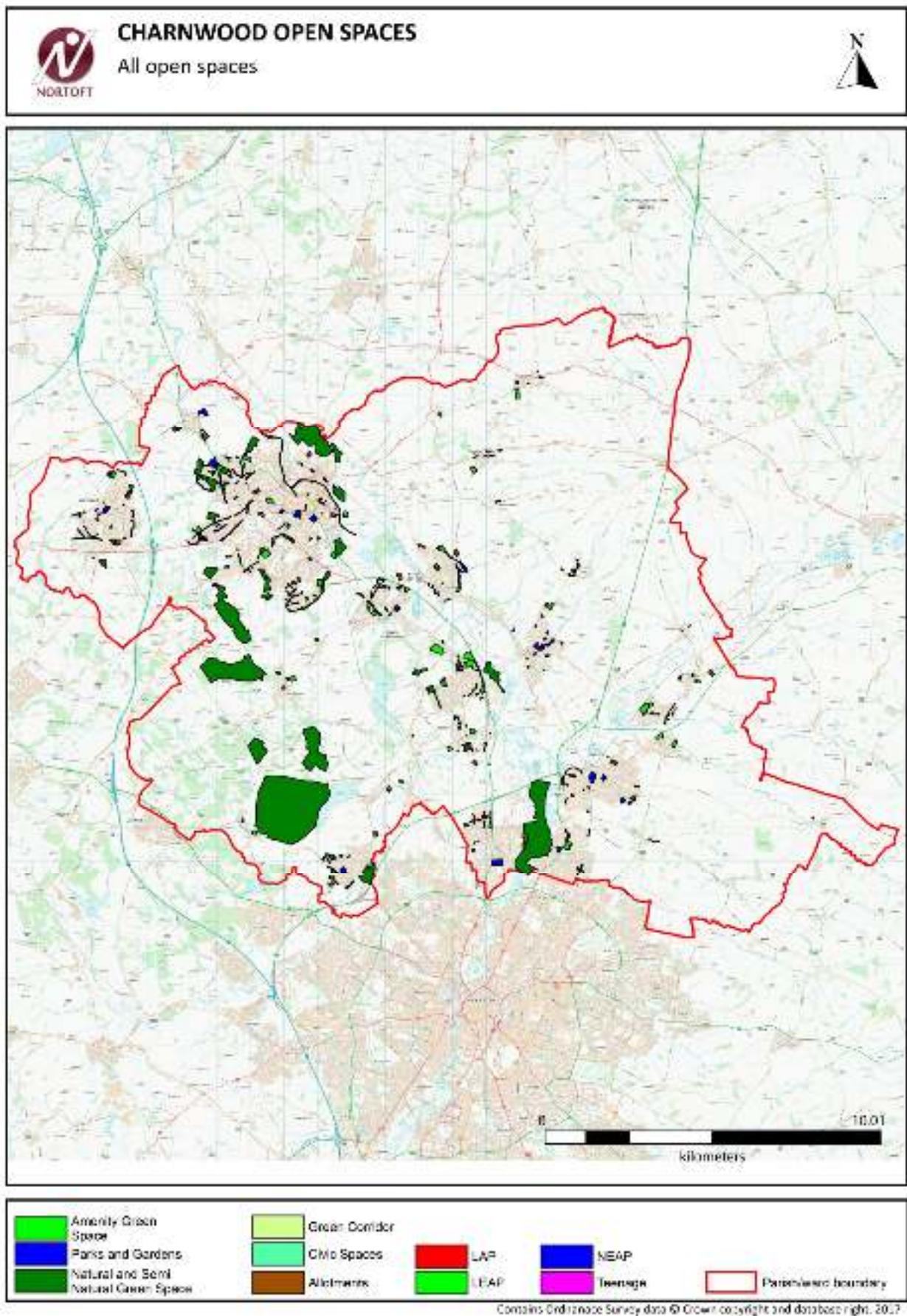
Typology	Area (hectares)	Current level of provision (Ha per 1000 population)
Parks and Gardens	47.5	0.29
Amenity Green Space	167.9	1.01
Natural and Semi Natural Green Space	937.9	5.65
Green Corridors	41.3	0.25
Allotments	36.2	0.22
Cemeteries & Churchyards	42.8	0.26
Civic Spaces	3.5	0.02
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,277.1</b>	<b>7.7</b>

- 2.4** In the case of children’s play and youth facilities, these are often found within a larger site such as a park or recreation ground. Where this is the case, the physical area of the play/youth facility is incorporated into the overall total area of the park or recreation ground as it makes up part of the entirety of the site.
- 2.5** However, the total number and the area of the Children’s Play Areas and Youth Sites identified in the audit are shown in Figure 4 for completeness. This table also shows the current level of provision per 1000 population by the number of sites and by area.
- 2.6** For the purposes of the testing, the area of the play areas has been added to the parish and ward totals where a facility is clearly part of a larger open space site.

*Figure 4: Current levels of children's play and youth provision*

<b>Typology</b>	<b>Number of sites</b>	<b>Area (hectares)</b>	<b>Current level of provision (Sites per 1000 population)</b>	<b>Current level of provision (ha per 1000 population)</b>
Children's Play Sites	99	9.8	0.6	0.06
Youth Provision	31	2.8	0.2	0.02

Figure 5: Open spaces in Charnwood borough – all typologies



## SECTION 3: POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 The policies and priorities of Charnwood Borough Council are set out in a number of key policy documents and these provide the justification for the authority's and its partners' investment in open spaces. Relevant policy documents include national and local planning documents, the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Corporate Strategic Plan. Key documents relevant to this study are summarised below.
- 3.2 All of these documents are relevant but the main current adopted policy base is the Charnwood Borough Council (CBC) Local Plan Core Strategy (CS 2011-2028) (Charnwood Borough Council, 2016) adopted in 2015 and the Open Spaces Strategy 2013-2028 (Charnwood Borough Council, 2013).

### National Policies

- 3.3 These national policies provide the overall structure for planning and wider community policies, which is then developed further within the local context.

### National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

- 3.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Communities and Local Government, 2012) sets out the Government's national planning policies for new development. They aim to create the homes and jobs that the country needs while protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment. The NPPF requires local assessments to be made of sport, recreation and open space, and key policies for both the provision and protection of facilities and spaces. The following paragraphs are all relevant but the key paragraphs are highlighted in bold:
- Para 17: Local Plans should take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.
  - Paragraph 70: positive planning for the provision and use of shared space including community facilities and sports venues to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.
  - **Paragraph 73: justification of provision needs to be set out within up to date assessments.**
  - **Paragraph 74: the protection of existing open space, sports and recreational buildings including playing fields, with specific policy exceptions.**
  - Paragraph 156: setting the strategic priorities for *"the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities"*.
  - Paragraph 178: the duty for authorities to co-operate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, including sport and recreation.
  - Paras 203 to 206: On the use of planning conditions, and that they need to meet the relevant tests.

## National Planning Practice Guidance

3.5 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) is a suite of guidance information which is regularly updated, added to and amended. This information is designed to support the interpretation of the NPPF policies. The most important guidance documents for the open space, sport and recreation strategies are summarised below.

### *Open space, sports and recreation facilities*

3.6 This guidance (Dept for Communities and Local Government, 2014) reconfirms the need for up to date assessments of sport, recreation and open space as a requirement to justify developers' obligations. It specifically refers to the duty of local authorities to cooperate where open spaces serve a wider area. The open space, sport and recreation strategies meet the requirement for up to date assessments and cooperation across the boundaries of the authorities.

3.7 The note provides guidance for the designation of Local Green Space both in Local Plans and in Neighbourhood Plans. Such green spaces need to be in public ownership but may or may not have public access, and are not therefore specifically addressed as a category in this open spaces report.

### *Health and wellbeing*

3.8 The Health and Wellbeing guidance (Dept for Communities and Local Government, 2014) recognises the importance of planning to the quality of the built and natural environments, which are a major determinant of health and wellbeing. This link is fundamental to the NPPF and is the main driver for the open space, sport and recreation strategy work. The guidance draws this out in relation to the issues that could be considered through the plan-making processes, and which are a key consideration for the strategy recommendations:

- development proposals can support strong, vibrant and healthy communities and help create healthy living environments which should, where possible, include making physical activity easy to do and create places and spaces to meet to support community engagement and social capital;
- the local plan promotes health, social and cultural wellbeing and supports the reduction of health inequalities;
- the local plan considers the local health and wellbeing strategy and other relevant health improvement strategies in the area;
- opportunities for healthy lifestyles have been considered (e.g. planning for an environment that supports people of all ages in making healthy choices, helps to promote active travel and physical activity, and promotes access to healthier food, high quality open spaces, green infrastructure and opportunities for play, sport and recreation);
- access to the whole community by all sections of the community, whether able-bodied or disabled, has been promoted.

## Natural Environment

**3.10** The Natural Environment guidance (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2016) covers landscape, biodiversity and ecosystems, green infrastructure, brownfield land, soils and agricultural land. In relation to the open space, sport and recreation strategies, the key sections relate to ecosystem services which form part of the open spaces site assessment, and green infrastructure networks.

## National Framework for Sport and Physical Activity

**3.10** The national sports strategy from the Government and the responding Sport England national strategy provides high level justification for the emerging recommendations and the identification of priorities within each of the strategies. A major theme across all of the national guidance is the objective of getting more people more active, and encouraging an active lifestyle from the earliest ages, in a large part to improve the health and wellbeing of the communities. Although these strategies do not immediately appear to relate to open space provision, they provide some of the justification for open space provision; health and wellbeing.

### H M Government Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation

**3.11** This wide-ranging detailed strategy (Dept for Culture, Media & Sport, 2015) was launched in December 2015 with the aim to change the way in which sport is considered, from simply how many people take part, to what people get out of participating and what more can be done to encourage everyone to have a physically active lifestyle. Open spaces are often used for a range outdoor sports, with pitch sports such as football and cricket using parks and recreation grounds which are multi-functional.

**3.12** The funding decisions of Government will now be made on the basis of the social good that sport and physical activity can deliver, not simply the number of participants. The five key outcomes which will define success in sport are:

- physical wellbeing
- mental wellbeing
- individual development
- social and community development
- economic development.

**3.15** The primary funding focuses on those people who tend not to take part in sport including women and girls, disabled people, those in lower socio-economic groups and older people. The Government strategy also broadened Sport England's remit so that it became responsible for sport outside of school from the age of 5 rather than 14. With this focus on extending sporting opportunities, the importance of open spaces as a venue for activities and fitness facilities such as ParkRun, green gyms, and "street games", have become increasingly important.

**3.14** The Government’s strategy recognises that local government are the biggest public sector investor in sport and physical activity, with councils having a crucial role in delivering sport and physical activity opportunities. As such many councils have integrated physical activity into public health policy.

**3.15** In relation to open spaces, the strategy states:

*“Being close to where people live, high quality multi-use local green spaces can play a key role as sporting venues and as alternative settings for sport and healthy activity for communities including new audiences that are less likely to use traditional sports centres. The opportunities to realise the multiple benefits that can be achieved for communities by investing in green spaces and routes as venues for sport and healthy activity should be considered whenever they arise.”*

**3.16** The strategy specifically states that support for sport and physical activity infrastructure is not restricted to pitches, sports halls and buildings. In future it should include all types of places where people take part in activity in both rural and urban environments. Providing people with the freedom to use existing facilities and spaces and keeping them in good repair, is seen as important as building new infrastructure.

### Sport England: Towards an Active Nation, Strategy 2016-2021

**3.17** Sport England launched its new five year national strategy in 2016 (Sport England, 2016). It responded to the Government’s Sporting Future strategy, and as such has a stronger focus on reaching those who are least active, and helping to deliver the wider Government’s strategy’s outcomes.

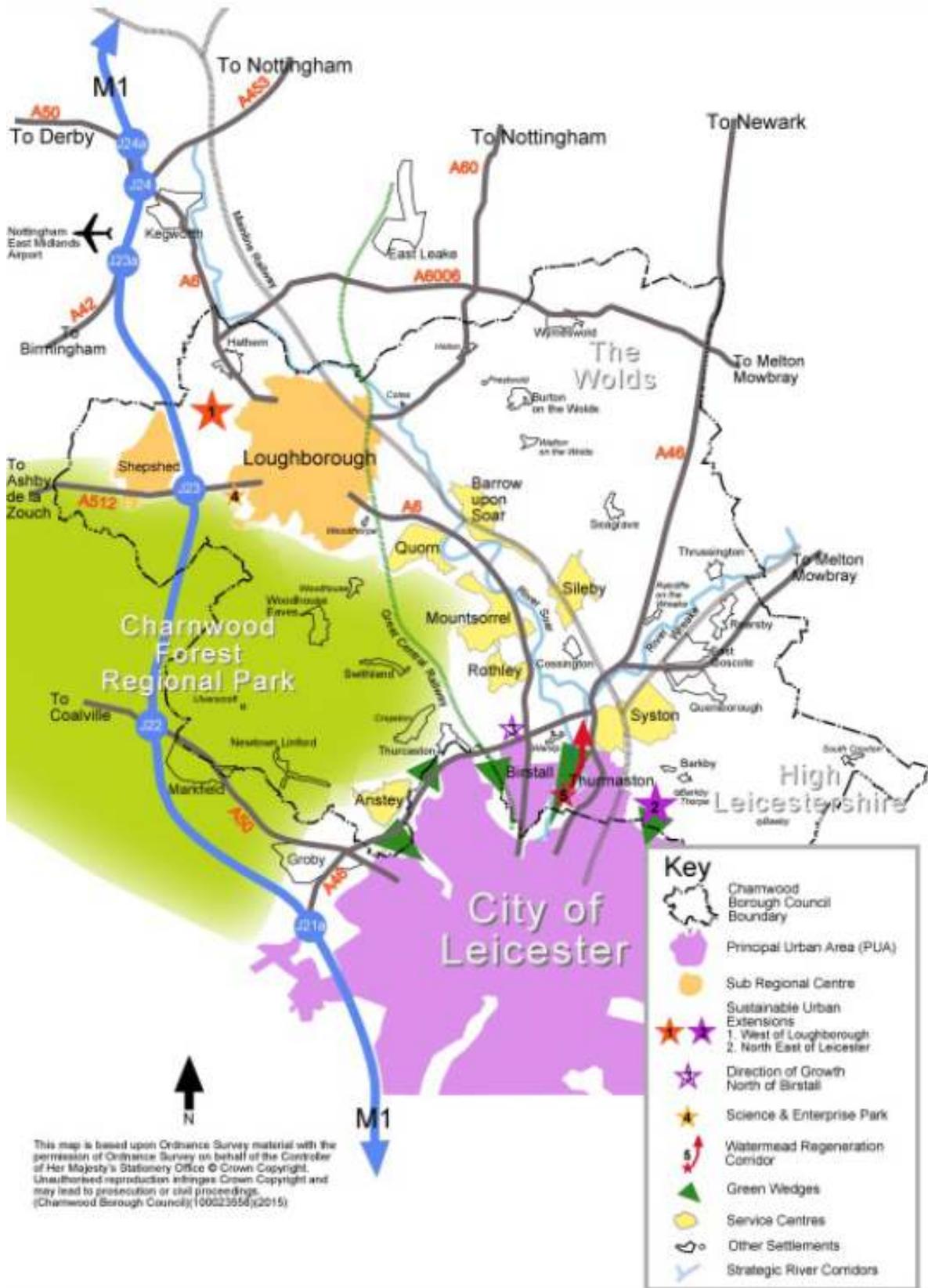
## Local Policies

### Charnwood Borough Council Core Strategy (November 2015)

#### Development Strategy for Charnwood

**3.18** The Core Strategy key diagram provides a valuable overview of the district, the main growth points, and major green infrastructure, including the green wedges and strategic river corridors. A copy of the Key Diagram is provided as Figure 6.

Figure 6: Core Strategy key diagram



3.15 The Core Strategy (Charnwood Borough Council , 2016) considers (para 4.12) how well the community is provided for in terms of open spaces and sport and recreation facilities. The evidence showed that the Borough is well provided for in terms of indoor and outdoor sports facilities and playing pitches but that there are gaps in the provision for children and young people and insufficient provision of allotments. It showed that there is a good distribution of parks, natural and semi natural green spaces, and amenity green space generally. However, there are localised gaps and deficiencies in the provision and/or quality of provision in all parts of the Borough. It notes the need to plan facilities for the new housing developments.

3.16 Delivery of housing growth in the period 2011 to 2028 is identified as at least 13,940 new homes. The majority will be adjacent to the main urban areas as sustainable urban extensions (SUEs). The housing trajectory identifies delivery of new homes at a rate of about 820 dwellings per year over the plan period.

*Figure 7: Summary of housing provision and strategy  
(source: Core Strategy)*

	Planned Housing Provision 2011-2028	Completions 2011 - 2014	Commitments* as of November 2014	Residual Provision Required up to 2028	Estimated Supply from Strategic Sites up to 2028	Estimated Total Supply from Completions, Commitments and Strategic Sites 2011 - 2028***
Principal Urban Area	5,500	401	730	4,369	4,595	5,726
Loughborough and Shepshed	5,000	412	2,511	2,077	2,440	5,363
Service Centres	3,000	778	2,682	0	0	3,460
Rest of Borough	500	211	676	0	0	887
<b>Charnwood Total</b>	<b>14,000**</b>	<b>1,802</b>	<b>6,599</b>	<b>6,446</b>	<b>7,035</b>	<b>15,436</b>

\*Commitments include sites with planning permission or with a resolution to grant permission subject to S.106, sites under construction and sites saved under policy H/1 of the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan (2004)

\*\* Figure rounded up from 13,940 (820 x 17yrs)

\*\*\* Additional windfall sites may also come forward within the settlement boundaries between 2014 and 2028.

Service Centres are: Anstey, Barrow upon Soar, Mountsorrel, Quorn, Rothley, Sileby and Syston.

3.17 The Leicester & Leicestershire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (GL Hearn, 2017) sets out an objectively assessed need in Charnwood of 994 homes per year between 2011 and 2036. The new Charnwood Local Plan will need to have regard to this figure in assessing how much, and where, land can be allocated for new development.

3.20 The Core Strategy policies that relate to open space and the major developments are set out below.

3.23 The settlement hierarchy in the Core Strategy is given in Policy CS1. The main elements of this are:

- Leicester Principal Urban Area, including Birstall and Thurmaston parishes and the North East Leicester SUE
- Loughborough and Shepshed
- Service Centres:
  - Anstey
  - Barrow Upon Soar
  - Mountsorrel
  - Quorn
  - Rothley
  - Sileby
  - Syston
- Other Settlements:
  - Barkby
  - Burton on the Wolds
  - Cossington
  - East Goscote
  - Hathern
  - Newtown Linford
  - Queniborough
  - Rearsby
  - Thrussington
  - Thurcaston
  - Woodhouse Eaves
  - Wymeswold
- Small Villages and Hamlets

3.24 This settlement hierarchy is used to structure the open spaces assessment and recommendations, with the primary focus being on the Leicester Principal Urban Area (which includes the parishes of Birstall and Thurmaston and the North East Leicester SUE), Loughborough, Shepshed and the listed Service Centres. In these locations there is expected to be sufficient good quality open space provision to meet all of the recommended open space standards; quantity, accessibility and quality.

3.25 The open space provision in the “Other Settlements” and in the “Small Villages and Hamlets” is, and will remain, more limited. The size of the main settlements in each parish will determine the amount of and type of open space provided. In most cases, there is unlikely to be a formal park or garden within walking distance, though there may be some amenity green space. The size and nature of children’s and teenage play provision will also reflect the size of the settlement, with most being expected to provide a Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) for younger children, but the very smallest settlements may not be large enough for even this type of provision.

## Our Environment

3.26 Chapter 7 of the Core Strategy provides the general policies for Our Environment, including Strategic Green Infrastructure with reference to the Charnwood Forest/National Forest, River Soar Corridor, the edge of Leicester Urban Fringe and the Loughborough Shepshed Urban Fringe. The chapter also addresses: biodiversity and geodiversity; heritage; open spaces sport and recreation; and, sustainable construction and energy.

3.27 For this Open Spaces Assessment Study the key Core Strategy Policy is CS15.

### *Policy CS 15 Open Spaces, Sports and Recreation*

We will work with our partners to meet the strategic open space needs of our community by 2028. We will do this by:

- requiring new developments to meet the standards set out in our Open Spaces Strategy, having regard to local provision and viability;
- requiring masterplans for our sustainable urban extensions that deliver quality open spaces;
- retaining open space, sport and recreation facilities unless they are clearly surplus to requirements or replacement provision of at least equal quantity and quality will be made in a suitable location;
- responding positively to development which contributes to open space, sport and recreation provision, including Local Green Space, identified through a Neighbourhood Plan or similar robust, community led strategy;
- and securing long-term management and investment plans for existing, and new facilities.

3.28 The Core Strategy notes (from para 7.44 and 7.99) that:

“Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation contributes to the health, well-being and cohesion of our communities as well as civic pride. As our population increases, the pressure on current provision will mount, and there will be a need to provide significant areas of open space and long-term management arrangements.”

“Our Open Spaces Strategy 2013-2028 includes standards for the quantity, quality and accessibility of open spaces in new developments, based upon our evidence. We will apply these to new development proposals having regard to viability. We will expect proposals to consider the relationship between different types of open space required to satisfy the standards and to deliver high quality spaces. Our approach to indoor sport is informed by our Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study.”

3.29 The Core Strategy confirms that the adopted standards are those as set out in the Open Spaces Strategy 2013-2028. These are given in Figure 8. This table includes the standard for Outdoor Sports Facilities, though these fall outside of the remit of this study. The quality standards contained in the 2013 Open Spaces Strategy go beyond

those contained in the 2010 assessment report as this earlier document did not include a quality standard for green corridors, civic spaces and cemeteries and churchyards. The Adoption standard was also added by the 2013 report.

*Figure 8: Adopted open space standards*

Typology	Quantity Standard (hectares per 1000 population)	Accessibility Standard	Quality Standard – Key features of a Site
Parks	0.32 (Current provision equates to 0.32ha per 1000)	15 min walk time (720m). 10 minute drivetime in rural settlements where the population falls below the minimum required to need a park.	Adoption standard: A regularly mowed smooth surfaced grassland space with tree and shrub planting suitable for a variety of informal outdoor recreation activities. Including features such as gardens, footpaths, play areas, young people’s facilities, seating and litter bins. Prepared in accordance with an agreed plan.  Clean and litter free, appropriate planting and well kept grass. It is desirable to include toilets, seating, footpaths, nature features, litter bins and safety features. They should have a clear entrance, boundaries and lighting.
Natural and Semi Natural Open Space	2.0 (to be applied to new provision only). Current provision equates to 5.7ha	10 min walk time (480m)	Adoption standard: An accessible space with wildlife habitats to improve biodiversity. These may be predominantly woodland, water, meadow or a combination. Prepared in accordance with an agreed management plan.  Clean and litter free, nature features, safe footpaths and appropriate planting. It is also desirable for sites to include water features, parking, dog walking facilities, seating, information and toilets.
Amenity Green Space	0.46 (Current provision equates to 0.45ha per 1000)	10 min walk time (480m)	Adoption standard: A regularly mowed smooth surfaced grassland space. Including features such as tree and shrub planting and footpaths. Prepared in accordance with an agreed plan.  Clean and litter free, regularly maintained and with well kept grass and appropriate planting. Where possible, sites should also contain litter bins, dog bins and seating and be safe and secure.
Provision for Children & Young People	1 facility within 480m of every home	10 min walk time (480m)	Adoption standard: A LAP, LEAP or NEAP constructed to EN 1176 and EN 1177 standards or a Facility for Young People. The facility to have a compliant RoSPA installation report. Prepared in accordance with an agreed plan.

			Facilities should be appropriate and designed through consultation with children and young people. They should be clean and litter free, well maintained and should also contain seats, litter bins and be dog free (where appropriate). The site should be appropriately located and meet minimum LAP/LEAP/NEAP criteria with a defined main entrance with clear boundaries.
Outdoor Sports Facilities	2.60 (of which a minimum of 1.09 should be community use pitches) Current provision equates to 2.58 ha per 1000 of which 0.90 are community use pitches.	10 min walk time (grass pitches) 10 min drive time – tennis courts, bowling greens, athletics tracks, golf courses and synthetic turf pitches.	Adoption standard: A high quality sports facility that is fit for purpose and prepared to the standards required by the governing body of sport e.g. Football Association, Lawn Tennis Association. Pavilion/changing and parking facilities to meet Sport England standards. Sports fields to be provided to a specification agreed by the Sports Turf Research Institute or equivalent organisation.  Facilities should be clean and litter free with well kept grass and safe playing surfaces with the pitch appropriately maintained. It is desirable to provide parking, seating facilities, changing facilities and toilets and be dog free.
Allotments	0.33 (Current provision equates to 0.26 ha per 1000)	15 min walk time (long term – 720m)	Adoption standard: A high quality allotment site that is fit for purpose. Including the following features: Loam to a minimum depth of 400mm with few stones; no shading or root invasion by large trees; 2 metre perimeter palisade fencing and gates; water supply with taps or troughs at appropriate intervals; appropriate concrete vehicle access throughout the site, waste container storage and parking; sheds provided adjacent to each plot; onsite toilet; plots laid out with plot markers with 500mm grass strips between plots. Plots ploughed to an agreed depth. Prepared in accordance with an agreed plan.  Allotments should be clean, litter free and secure. It is desirable to provide appropriate parking, toilets, water supply and managed appropriate access routes.
Green Corridors	No Standard Set	No Standard Set	Adoption standard: An accessible linear space with wildlife habitats to improve biodiversity. These may be predominantly woodland, water, meadow or a combination. Prepared in accordance with an agreed management

			<p>plan.</p> <p>Sites should be clean and litter free, with clearly defined footpaths and natural features. It is also desirable for sites to have an effective main entrance, litter and dog bins, appropriate planting, lighting and</p>
Civic Spaces	No Standard Set	No Standard Set	<p>Adoption standard: An accessible high quality public space. Prepared in accordance with an agreed plan.</p> <p>Sites should be clean and litter free with well kept grass and seating. It is also desirable to have parking facilities, appropriately maintained footpaths and planting, litter and dog bins, and should be secure and safe.</p>
Cemeteries, disused churchyards and other burial sites	No Standard Set	No Standard Set	<p>Adoption standard for Cemeteries: A high quality site that is fit for purpose. Including the following features: 2 metre perimeter fencing and gates; water supply with taps at appropriate intervals; litter bins at appropriate intervals; appropriate tarmac vehicle access throughout the site road markings and parking bays; street lighting; public toilet; cemetery buildings including office, staff quarters and equipment storage; Cemetery plots laid out with concrete beams and plot markers.</p> <p>Prepared in accordance with an agreed plan. Facilities should be clean and litter free, with well kept grass, appropriate planting and infrastructure, including bins. It is also desirable for sites to contain seating, appropriately maintained and safe footpaths, opportunities for biodiversity and wildlife, and toilets (where appropriate).</p>

3.3.1 Policy CS12 considers Green Infrastructure, where the Council will protect and enhance the green infrastructure assets for their community, economic and environmental values.

- “The Council will work with our partners to define, protect and enhance the Charnwood Forest Regional Park and support the aims of the National Forest Strategy by: supporting the woodland economy, rural diversification, including sustainable and green tourism which protects and enhances the distinctive Charnwood Forest landscape; seeking planting from developments that are within the Charnwood Forest Regional Park that meet National Forest Planting Guidelines; and securing green links between developments and the Charnwood Forest.

- The Council will also support proposals that relate to the River Soar and Grand Union Canal Corridor which: provide high quality walking and cycling links between the corridor and our towns and villages; deliver hubs and other high-quality tourism opportunities linked to the River Soar at Loughborough, Barrow upon Soar and Thurmaston; and protect and enhance water bodies and resources.
- The Council will protect and enhance the Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Areas by: enhancing the network of green infrastructure assets through strategic developments in accordance with Policies CS19, CS20, CS21, CS22 and CS23; addressing the identified needs in open space provision; and supporting development in Green Wedges that: - retains the open and undeveloped character of the Green Wedge; - retains and creates green networks between the countryside and open spaces within the urban areas; and - retains and enhances public access to the Green Wedge, especially for recreation)”.

### Access and Travel

3.31 Chapter 8 of the Core Strategy opens with consideration of sustainable travel, and provides policy direction to improve cycling and walking routes.

### South Charnwood: Edge of Leicester

3.37 This chapter of the Core Strategy specifically includes the North East of Leicester SUE.

### North East of Leicester SUE (CS19)

3.39 The 5,500 new homes in the Leicester Principal Urban Area includes the North East of Leicester SUE (east of Thurmaston and north of Hamilton) with approximately 4,500 homes, of which 3,250 are planned to be delivered by 2028.

3.41 The S106 agreement for the NE Leicester SUE is in now place and this has the following elements.

Parks & Gardens	48 ha of parkland
Natural & Semi Natural	61 ha
Amenity	6 ha
Outdoor Sport	29 ha of formal and informal sport/recreation
Children & Young People	7 sites for children and 7 sites for young people
Allotments	4.0 ha
Burial Space	0.6 ha

3.45 The masterplan for North East Leicestershire can be viewed at the following link: [https://pap.charnwood.gov.uk/aniteim.websearch/\(S\(gis2xt55issav255g0k4zc45\)\)/Download.aspx?ID=42865](https://pap.charnwood.gov.uk/aniteim.websearch/(S(gis2xt55issav255g0k4zc45))/Download.aspx?ID=42865)

3.36 The open spaces provided in the SUE will primarily serve the population of this new housing area, however there may be some wider potential benefits to the existing adjacent communities in terms of improving the accessibility to some open space types, particularly those which have a wider catchment area such as parks, allotments and play provision for older children and teenagers.

### *North of Birstall SUE (CS20)*

3.37 Housing sites include a direction of growth for a second sustainable urban extension of at least 1,500 homes in the North of Birstall SUE (north of the A46) of which 1,345 are planned to be delivered by 2028. Policy CS20 identifies that the SUE should:

- provide an accessible, comprehensive and high-quality network of multi-functional green spaces in accordance with our open space standards in accordance with Policies CS15 and CS12 and garden suburb principles.

3.38 There are no specific items in the Infrastructure Schedule for this development but the planning application has been submitted for up to 1,650 homes. The following open space requirements have been recommended as a minimum, but the design details have yet to be finalised.

Parks & Gardens	1.27 ha
Natural & Semi Natural	7.92 ha
Amenity	1.82 ha
Outdoor Sport	10.30 ha of which 4.32 ha should be community use pitches
Children & Young People	Within 480m of each home
Allotments	1.31 ha

### *Watermead Regeneration Corridor (CS21)*

3.39 The sustainable urban extensions will be complemented by the Watermead Regeneration Corridor (employment land and part of the River Soar Corridor) which will also have a focus for leisure and recreation.

“Watermead Country Park is an important asset within the Corridor which itself extends to the waterfront at Thurmaston. Watermead Country Park is a network of old mineral workings and artificial lakes that run north to south along the path of the river. The Grand Union Canal also runs through the valley providing a direct access to the waterfront at Thurmaston. The Country Park is used for watersports and informal recreation and is a Local Wildlife Site. Within the Corridor there are areas at high risk of flooding. It has 250,000 visitors”

“Its future role is seen as supporting the regeneration of Thurmaston. Thurmaston is home to some of the most deprived households in the Borough. Part of Thurmaston borders the Country Park and is within the South Charnwood Priority Neighbourhood. Our evidence shows pockets of deprivation where there are low

levels of income among older people, low levels of education, skills and training and a poor-quality living environment. Community cohesion is also restricted by the physical barriers of the A607 and Midland Mainline railway”

“The opportunity to benefit the community by linking Thurmaston to the Watermead Corridor has not been taken in the past. We want to use the Corridor as a focus for defining a direction for growth to support the regeneration of Thurmaston, to restore the remaining mineral workings and to maximise the potential of the Country Park. Any development within the Corridor must be balanced carefully with our desire to protect and enhance the area’s valuable landscape, tranquillity and ecology”.

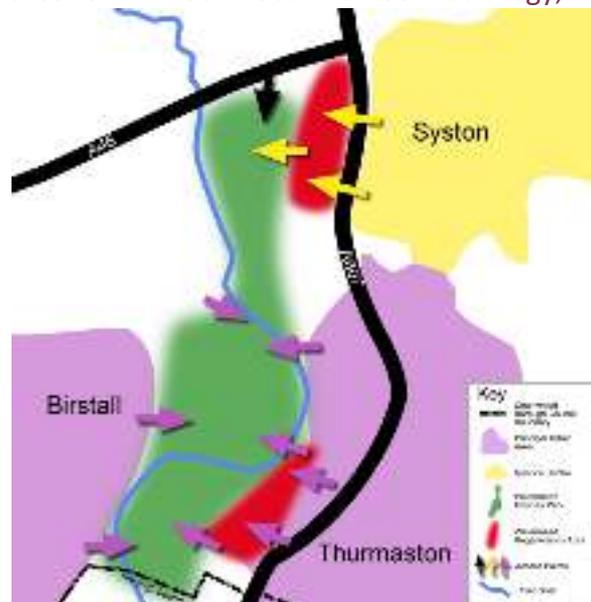
“We have worked with our partners to prepare a River Soar and Grand Union Canal Strategy. It recognises the need for new facilities to serve the 250,000 annual visitors to Watermead Country Park. The Strategy proposes a new marina with hotel and conference facilities associated with a mixed use development”.

“We have worked with our partners, including Sustrans, to improved walking and cycling links between the Country Park and Thurmaston”.

3.40 The Infrastructure Schedule for the River Soar Corridor identifies that at Watermead it is planned to include a new visitor centre and improved signage. The illustrative map for the Watermead Regeneration Corridor from the Core Strategy is given as Figure 9.

3.41 The proposals for Watermead are primarily the improvement of quality of the area, but the restoration of the mineral workings may lead to a larger area of accessible public open space, bringing more natural and semi-natural green space within easy reach of the adjacent communities.

Figure 9: Watermead Regeneration Corridor  
(source: Charnwood Local Plan Core Strategy, 2015)



## North Charnwood: Loughborough and Shepshed

3.43 Chapter 10 of the Core Strategy considers the north Charnwood and the planned growth in this area.

### *West Loughborough Growth Area (CS22)*

3.43 A sustainable urban extension is planned as the West Loughborough Growth Area of approximately 3,000<sup>1</sup> homes (2,440 by 2028). There are also planned approximately 1,200 homes within and adjoining Shepshed. Garendon Registered Park will also be restored; this site was previously private access only, but will now be opened up for public access. The Park has been registered by Historic England because it includes a number of listed buildings e.g. the remains of a Cistercian Abbey.

3.44 The SUE has a Resolution to grant Planning Permission, and the S106 is due to be signed soon. The development is for up to 3,200 homes and it will provide the following green infrastructure. The illustrative masterplan can be viewed at the following link and the table below shows the elements of open space.

[https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/files/documents/psd32\\_d\\_concept\\_masterplan\\_n\\_fpcr/PSD32%20d%20Concept%20Masterplan%20FPCR.pdf](https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/files/documents/psd32_d_concept_masterplan_n_fpcr/PSD32%20d%20Concept%20Masterplan%20FPCR.pdf)

Parks & Gardens	Est. 1.5 ha of parks within residential area, and 188 ha Garendon Historic Park (although much of this land will be kept under agricultural management).
Natural & Semi Natural	136 ha
Amenity	35 ha
Outdoor Sport	9 ha formal pitch provision and 13.8ha informal sport/recreation
Children & Young People	6 sites for Children and 6 sites for Young People within SUE. Off-site contribution towards improved play and young people's provision at Pear Tree Lane Open Space adjacent to the development.
Allotments	2.5 ha

3.45 The impact of the new public open space, particularly the new Garendon Park, will have potentially major benefits for the wider communities in Loughborough, where the provision of the park becomes accessible within a 15 minute walk time. New allotment space and play provision for older children and teenagers may also benefit the existing adjacent communities, depending upon their location within the SUE.

<sup>1</sup> NB An application for 3,200 homes was agreed at Committee in September 2015

## Shepshed

**3.46** The Core Strategy states that there are commitments for around 1,200 homes at Shepshed and that is sufficient to meet the strategic need.

## Charnwood Borough Council Open Spaces Strategy (2013-2028)

**3.47** The Open Spaces Strategy (Charnwood Borough Council , 2013) addressed the findings of the open spaces, sport and recreation study produced in 2010. It set out, amongst other things, how any shortages in open spaces would be addressed.

**3.48** The Open Spaces Strategy is designed to bring together a strategic framework for the management and development of better quality open spaces that are at a level which meets local needs and accessibility criteria. It will help to ensure that the Council acts in a co-ordinated way with all the stakeholders to make best use of open spaces by as much of the community as possible, across the whole Borough. It will support the Core Strategy to deliver the increased demand for the various types of open spaces through the anticipated sustained growth over the next fifteen years.

**3.49** The Open Spaces Strategy provides:

- A framework for the management, development and maintenance of open space owned by Charnwood Borough Council
- An action plan for the future delivery of open space to meet identified deficiencies
- Guidance and support for the delivery of open space through the Local Development Framework
- Leadership advice and support for alternative open space delivery partners
- Information to the communities of Charnwood on the provision of open space.

**3.50** The strategy provides a wider review of the policy framework, including such things as the Community Safety Partnership Plan 2011-2013, and the Climate Local initiative.

**3.51** The criteria for prioritising future investment was based on a hierarchy of typologies and the beneficial outcomes linked to:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Biodiversity
- Climate Mitigation
- Social Cohesion
- Heritage
- Economy
- Learning

3.50 This Open Space Assessment Study refreshes the open space standards used as a key baseline in the Open Spaces Strategy which were derived from the 2010 Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation Study, so allowing it in turn to be updated in the future.

## Neighbourhood Plans

3.51 Only Thurcaston/Cropston Neighbourhood Plan is adopted. The Barrow upon Soar Neighbourhood Plan has been submitted for formal consultation. Several other Neighbourhood Plans have commenced but they are at an early stage and do not yet have a relevant input for this open spaces study.

### *Thurcaston Cropston Neighbourhood Plan (2015 – 2028)*

3.52 The plan (Thurcaston and Cropston Parish Council, 2016) has the following elements that relate to open spaces.

- The need to maintain and improve the open spaces was heavily supported through the consultation, including with young people, which took place as part of the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Its objectives include to ensure that the community continues to have good access to the surrounding countryside and green spaces; and to protect open spaces that are important to the community and/or wildlife.

### *Barrow upon Soar Neighbourhood Plan (2016-2028) Submission Draft October 2016*

3.53 The Barrow upon Soar Neighbourhood Plan (Barrow upon Soar Parish Council, 2017) was considered by an independent examiner who concluded that the plan should now move to the formal referendum stage in June 2017.

3.54 Glebe Allotments, Nottingham Road are the only allotments in the village and are owned by the Leicester Diocesan Board of Finance. Part of this large allotment area had been put forward as a potential housing site and that has raised fears for their future. However, the Glebe Allotments have been nominated by the Parish Council as an Asset of Community Value and they lie outside the Limits to Development defined by this Neighbourhood Plan. The independent inspector's report of June 2017 supported the Nottingham Road allotment site becoming a Local Green Space, protecting the site from development.

3.55 A community orchard is to be provided in the main area of open space in the south and west of the proposed Melton Road housing site.

## Long distance routes

3.56 There are a number of long distance walking and cycling routes in Charnwood, and details about the most important ones are provided in Appendix 5. These are:

- The Charnwood Round – walk round the ancient Charnwood Forest
- The Leicestershire Round – a 100 mile walking route around the county of Leicestershire, passing through key locations such as Bradgate Park
- River Soar and the Grand Union Canal – cycle and walking route following the River Soar and the Grand Union Canal from Cossington, with links to Syston, Birstall and Thurmaston, through Watermead Country Park and into Leicester. The River Soar and Grand Union Partnership will be producing a cycling strategy and will identify opportunities for the improvement of both the cycling and walking routes.
- Sustrans cycle network – several routes run through Charnwood (see Appendix 5 for map).

## Protected sites

4.58 Open spaces can be formally protected, either because they are village greens or because they are protected by the Fields in Trust. These sites are usually well used by their communities and are not therefore usually under threat from development. The protected sites in Charnwood are listed Figure 10.

*Figure 10: Protected open space sites*

Location	Protected site	Designation
Barrow on Soar	Mill Lane Recreation Ground	Fields in Trust
Barrow on Soar	Salters Close	Fields in Trust
Burton on the Wolds	Towles Field	Fields in Trust
South Croxton	South Croxton Playing Field	Fields in Trust
Syston	Archdale Street Park	Fields in Trust
Woodhouse Eves	Woodhouse Eves	Fields in Trust
Thurmaston	Thurmaston Village Green	Doorstep Green
Anstey	The Green	Town/Village Green
Anstey	The Leys or Green Sward	Town/Village Green
Cossington	War Memorial	Town/Village Green
Mountsorrel	The Green	Town/Village Green
Quorndon	The Village Green	Town/Village Green
Quorndon	The War Memorial	Town/Village Green
Rearsby	The Green	Town/Village Green
Rothley	Cross Green	Town/Village Green
Rothley	Town Green	Town/Village Green
Seagrave	The Banks	Town/Village Green
Syston	Central Park	Town/Village Green
Walton-on-the-Wolds	The Village Green	Town/Village Green
Wymeswold	The Pound	Town/Village Green

## SECTION 4: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- 4.1 The study has included extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, relevant organisations, and individuals. This section of the report summarises the generic findings from the consultation, while specific points have been incorporated into the review of each open space typology.

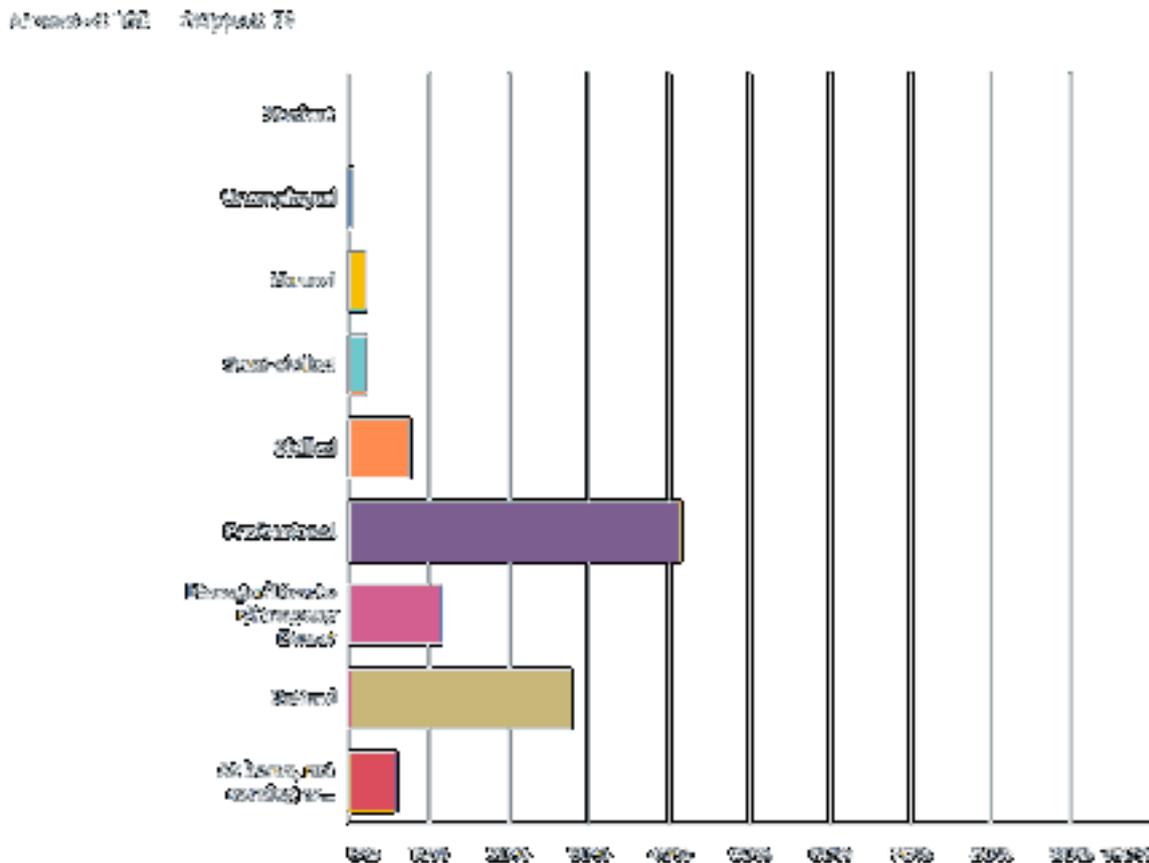
### Individual survey findings

- 4.2 An online survey for individuals was promoted by Charnwood Borough Council between 4<sup>th</sup> May and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017 and there were 258 responses.

#### Who responded to the survey?

- 4.3 Of those responding, 83% live in the borough, whilst 41% work there, 10% visit, and 1% study. 56% of respondents were female and 44% male, and there was an approximately even one third split across the age brackets of 25-45 years, 46-60 years, and over 60 years. Only 2% of the respondents were aged 16-24 years, and there were no responses from under 16s.
- 4.4 The question asking about the work that the respondent does resulted in a total of 180 responses being received. Figure 11 illustrates this. There is a clear bias towards those who consider themselves to be professional or who are a manager/director/company owner, and also those who are retired. The survey clearly did not attract/reach those who are less skilled, unemployed or who are students.

Figure 11: How would you describe the work you do?



4.4 Of those responding, 93% consider themselves to be white, 2% Asian/Asian British. 5% of the respondents gave no answer to this question. This rate of response compares with the 2011 Census data which showed that about 87% of the borough’s population was white, with the largest non-white group being Asian/Asian British at about 8.6%.

4.5 The implications for interpreting the findings from the study are:

- The findings can be considered a useful indicator of the main interests of residents in relation to their use of open space, how they travel there and their expectations.
- The survey is slightly under representative of the non-white community who may have some different expectations in relation to open spaces.
- The survey is significantly under representative of younger people in the borough, including students. In 2017 the borough was estimated by the ONS to have 17% of its population aged 15-24 years, and 16% of the population aged under 15 years. The use of open space by both of these age groups tends to be more active, often including both use of formal play opportunities and sports pitches.

- Those people who are less skilled or unemployed or students are less likely to have access to a car, and most often rely on walking to reach an open space. The survey findings in relation to car travel should therefore be treated with some caution.

4.7 The following is a summary of the key findings from the survey.

## Headline findings

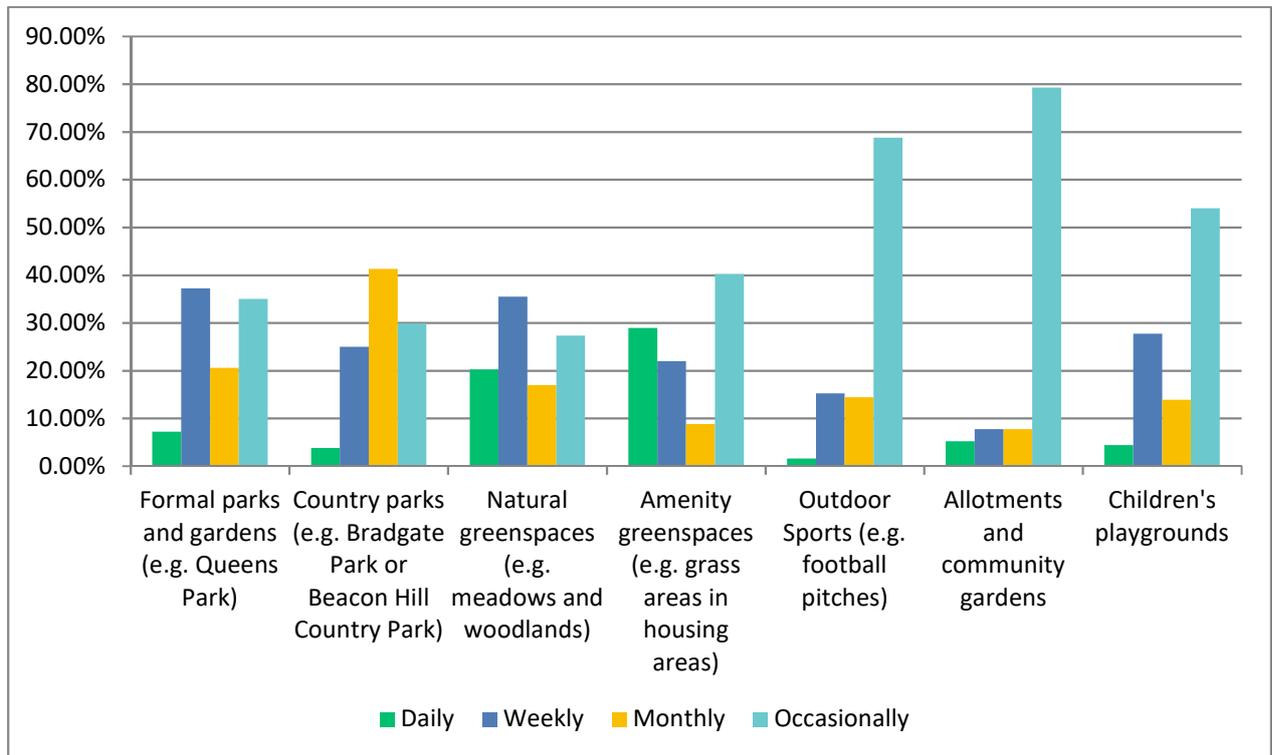
4.8 The facilities and spaces most used by the respondents, in descending order, are given in Figure 12. This demonstrates the importance of open spaces.

*Figure 12: Do you use these facilities and spaces?*

Facility type	% of respondents
Country Parks (e.g. Bradgate Park, Beacon Hill Country Park)	86%
Natural greenspaces (e.g. meadows and woodland)	73%
Formal parks and gardens e.g. Queens Park	73%
Walking / running routes (traffic free)	55%
Amenity greenspaces (e.g. grass areas in housing areas)	41%
Children's playgrounds	31%
Cycle routes	26%
Outdoor sports e.g. football pitches	13%
Allotments	9%
Skate parks	6%

4.9 One of the survey questions asked how often the respondents used each of the types of open space. The only type of greenspace that was used on a daily basis is the amenity greenspace. Formal parks, natural greenspaces and children's playgrounds are mostly used on a weekly basis. Country parks tend to be most used on a monthly basis, and most people responding to the survey only occasionally use allotments and community gardens, and outdoor sports facilities. The findings from the question are summarised in the graph in Figure 13.

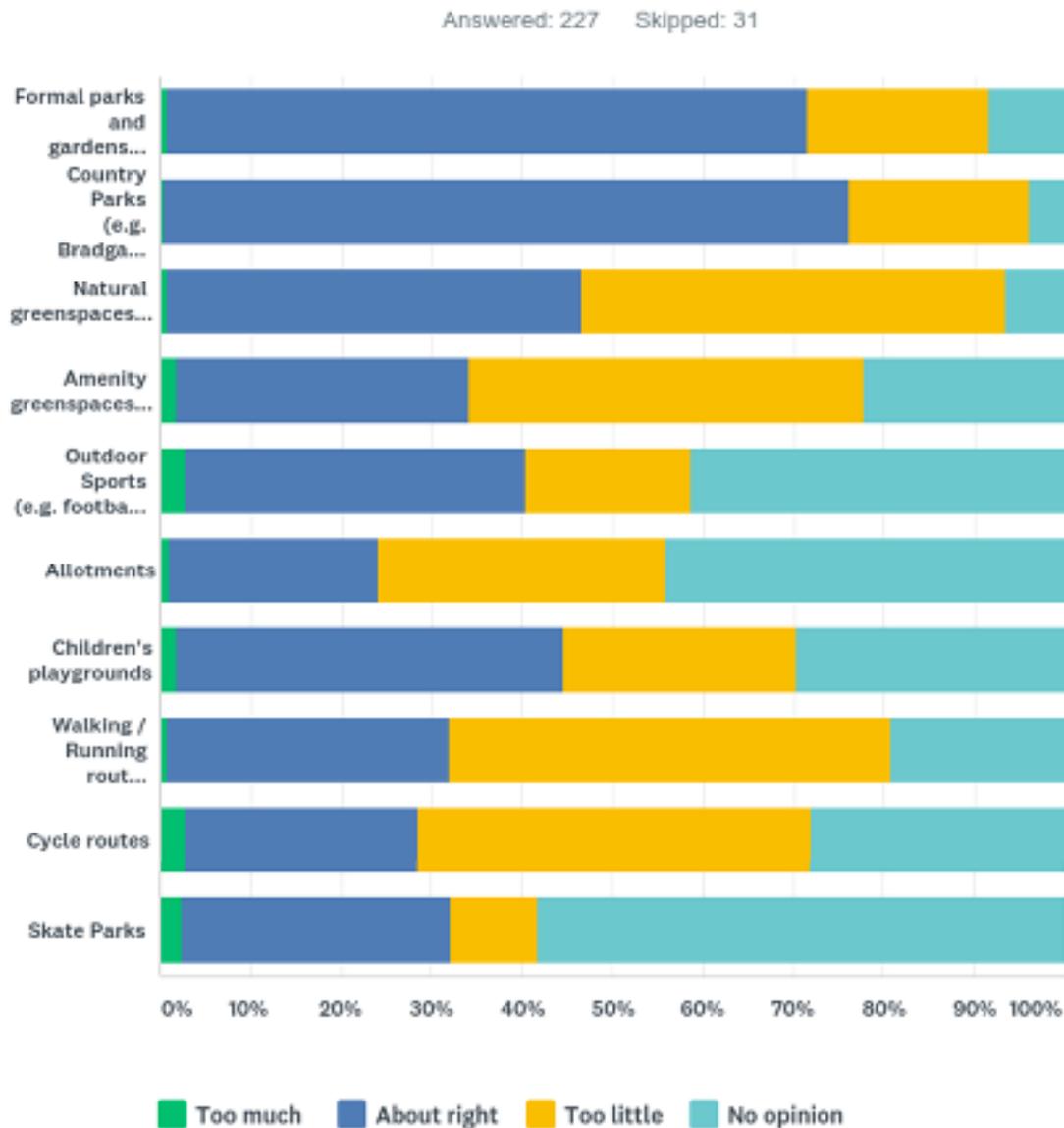
Figure 13: How often have you used each type of open space in the last 12 months?



4.1.1: A question asking whether the individual felt that there was too much, too little or about the right level of provision was asked, with the following results (Figure 14). This suggests that there is a general view that there are no open space types which are over-provided. The types of provision which people mostly consider that there should be more of, in descending order are:

- Natural greenspaces
- Walking/running routes (traffic free)
- Amenity greenspaces
- Cycle routes

Figure 14: Is there too much or too little provision of facilities and spaces?



4.11 Another question asked how important particular facilities and spaces were to the individual responding, asking the respondents to rank each from 1 (Very Important), to 6 (Not Important), see Figure 15.

4.12 The findings show strong support for the country parks and natural greenspaces, but generally less support for outdoor sports and allotments. The limited support to outdoor sports may in part reflect the skew in the age groups responding to the survey, as the pitch sports participation falls significantly from about the ages 16-19 years, with only relatively low levels of participation in football and rugby by the age of 45 years. The relative number of allotment holders compared to the overall population of the district is low, and this type of open space will usually only be important for these people.

- 4.13 The support for children's play will often depend on whether the individual responding to the survey has regular use of children's play facilities, usually accompanying their children (aged under about 8 years) or grandchildren.
- 4.14 Question 5 of the survey asked how open spaces could be better matched to the respondent's needs. The overriding response for the country parks, outdoor sports and allotments is that the spaces are fine as they are. However, for amenity greenspaces, formal parks and children's play, there is a clear demand for improved maintenance. There is demand for more: formal parks and gardens, natural greenspace, amenity green space, allotments and children's play.
- 4.15 Improvements to the safety of the open spaces is a relatively low priority except in relation to children's playgrounds, formal parks and amenity greenspace.
- 4.16 Increasing the number of activities available is only a desire in relation to the formal parks, outdoor sports, children's playgrounds and amenity greenspace.
- 4.17 The issue of accessibility only emerges in relation to the natural greenspace.

Figure 15: Relative importance of facilities and spaces to the respondent  
Rank 1 = most important

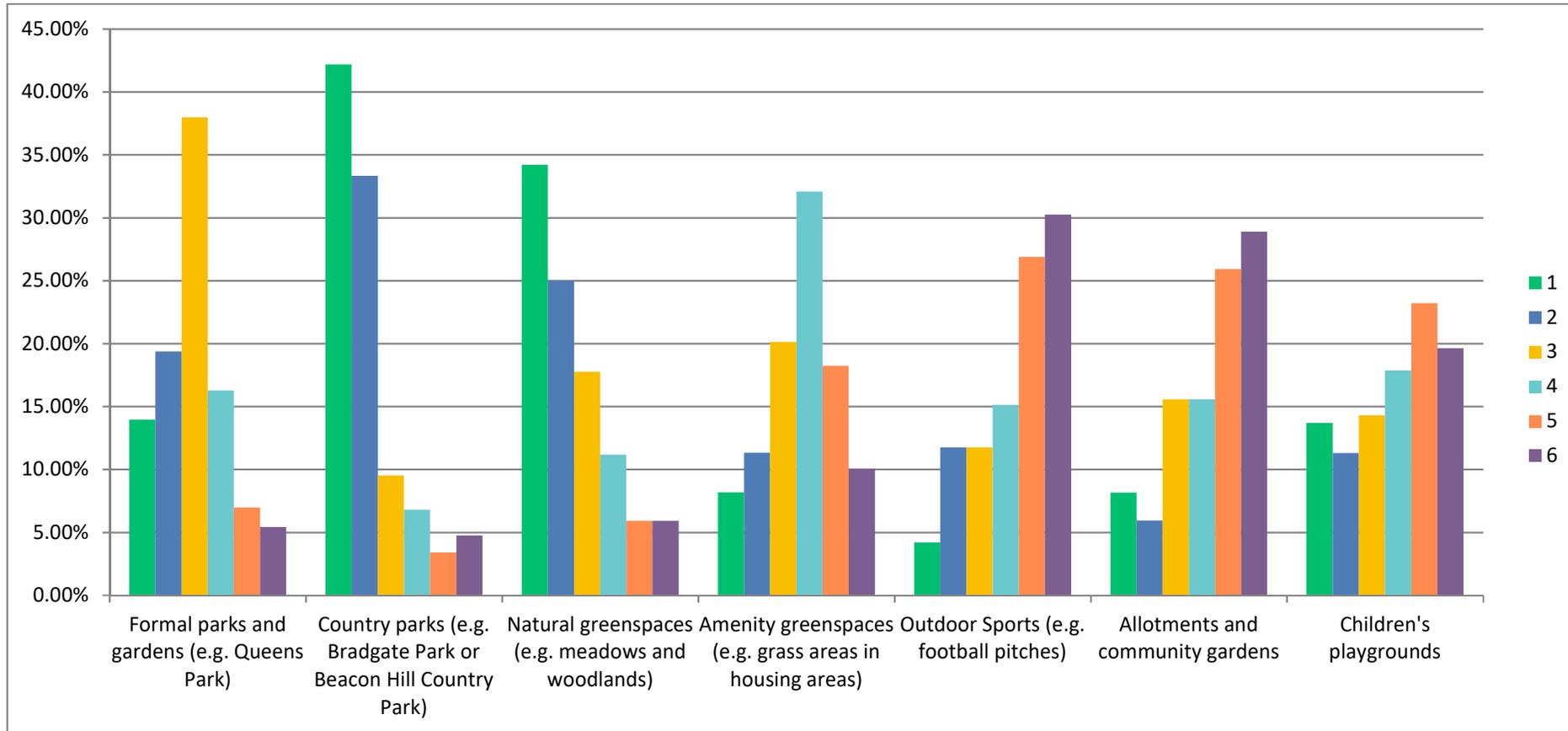
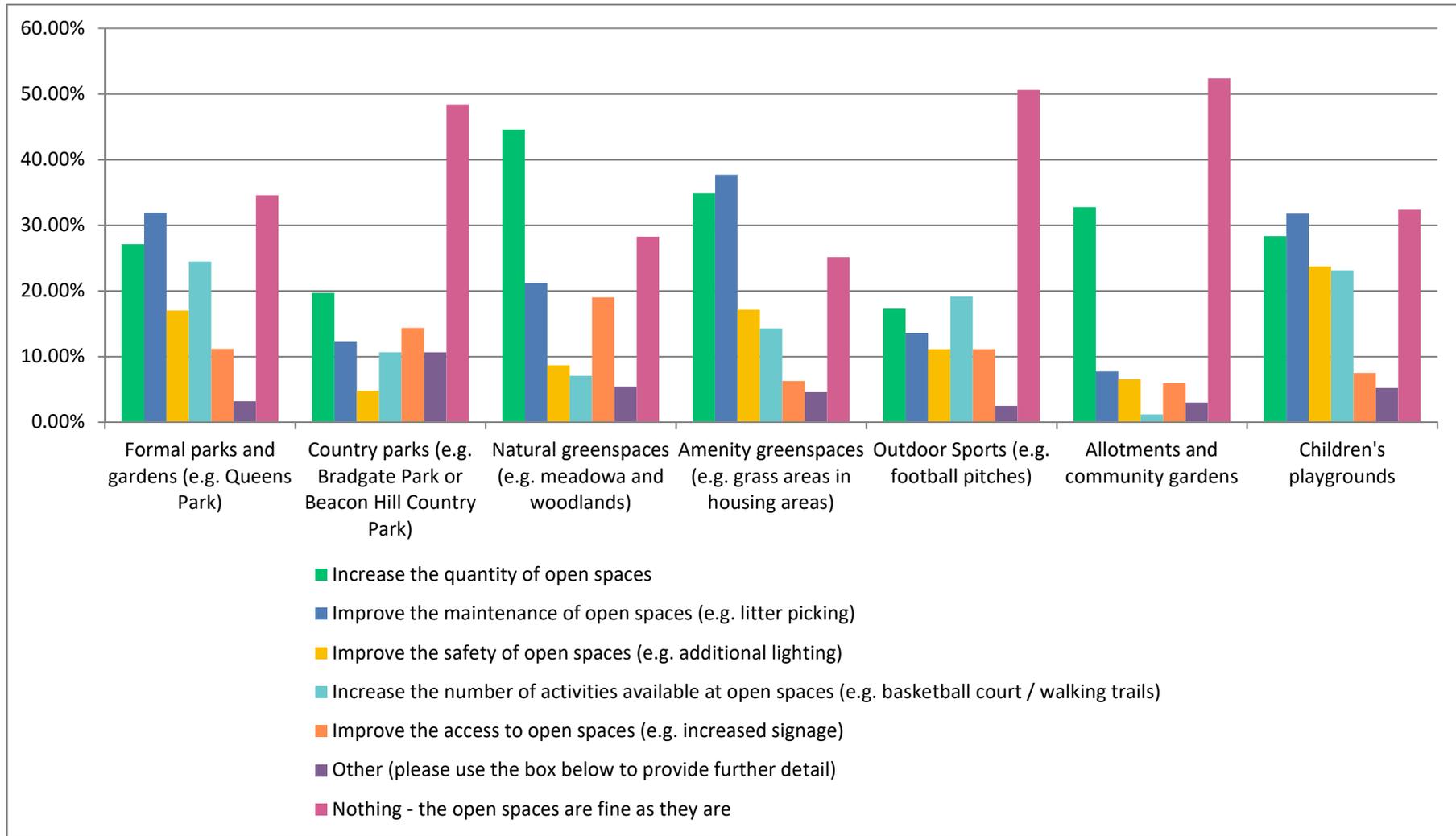


Figure 16: How could the provision of open space be better matched to your needs?



4.19 The travel time and “ideal” modes of transport have clear patterns, which can be used to inform the accessibility policy for different types of open space. The responses from Question 6: How long do you think you should be expected to travel to each type of open space, and the ideal mode of transport, gives the following results, see Figure 17.

*Figure 17: Travel mode and time to open spaces*

Type of open space	Maximum travel time in minutes	Mode of transport
Formal parks and gardens	15 minutes	Walk (58%) Car (28%)
Country parks	20 minutes	Car
Natural greenspaces	10 minutes	Walk
Amenity greenspaces	5 minutes	Walk
Outdoor sports	15 minutes	Walk (45%) Car (35%)
Allotments and community gardens	10 minutes	Walk (63%) Car (33%)
Children’s playgrounds	5-10 minutes	Walk

4.19 For the formal parks, outdoor sports and allotments accessibility, there seems to be a clear split between walking and use of a car to reach the open space. It may be appropriate to consider, for these typologies, separate accessibility standards for the urban and rural areas of the authority.

4.20 There ideal forms of other transport are relatively low, with the highest rate for cycling being in relation to outdoor sports (13% of trips) and to country parks (10%). Taking a bus is not seen as an ideal transport mode, with the highest support being in the relation to country parks (10%) followed by formal parks and gardens (8%).

4.21 Survey respondents were asked if they experienced problems at their most visited open space site. Mostly minor problems were identified, but the significant problems, in decreasing order are (with percentage of respondents) see Figure 18.

*Figure 18: Problems in open spaces*

Significant problem	Percentage of respondents reporting that there is a significant problem
Dog fouling	33%
Litter/tipping	28%
Maintenance	28%
Anti-social behaviour	19%
Vandalism and graffiti	17%
Smells	7%
Noise	5%

4.22 From these returns, it is clear that the most significant problems are associated with the management of the open spaces, although anti-social behaviour and vandalism and graffiti can also be important.

## Parish, town and ward consultation findings

### Overall returns

4.23 Of the 34 parishes and town councils, 22 responses were received. There were also 4 returns from the Loughborough town wards, of which only 2 were in any detail, Garendon and Hastings.

4.24 Overall there does not seem to be a particular pattern in the responses, but some parishes appear better provided with open space than others.

### How would you rate the overall quality of the open spaces i.e. how good are they?

4.25 Most of the Parish Councils considered the quality of their open spaces to be at least “average”, and several are good.

4.26 The parishes and wards where the quality was considered poor for particular typologies were:

*Figure 19: Parishes where typologies considered poor quality*

Parish/Loughborough Ward	Open space types considered to be poor quality in that parish/ward
Barrow upon Soar	Allotments
East Goscote	Allotments, Churchyards and cemeteries
Hoton	Churchyards and cemeteries
Mountsorrel	Allotments
Thurmaston	Allotments
Hastings Ward	Parks and Gardens, Children’s Play

## How would you rate the overall quantity of the open spaces i.e. are there enough?

- 4.27** None of the parishes or wards considered that there was too much open space provision of any typology.
- 4.28** The parishes and wards where there was considered to be too little open space for particular typologies are given in the table below. It is clear that Barrow Upon Soar seems least well provided in terms of any types of green space.
- 4.29** The highest requirements for additional provision are for allotments, children's and teenage play provision, and natural greenspace and green corridors. There is less, but still some demand for parks and gardens and churchyards/cemeteries, see Figure 20.

*Figure 20: Locations with too little open space provision*

Parish Council/ Loughborough Ward	Open space types considered to have too little provision in that parish/ward				
	Parks & Gardens	Children's play incl. teenage	Natural Greenspace and Green Corridors	Allotments and Community Gardens	Churchyards and Cemeteries
Anstey Parish Council			X	X	
Barrow Upon Soar Parish Council	X	X	X	X	X
East Goscote Parish Council			X	X	X
Mountsorrel Parish Council		X		X	
Queniborough Parish Office			X	X	
Quorn Parish Council	X	X			X
Rothley Parish Council	X				X
Shepshed Town Council		X	X		
Sileby Parish Council					
Swithland Parish Council					
Syston Town Council					
Thurmaston Parish Council		X		X	X
Walton on the Wolds Parish Council				X	
Woodhouse Parish Council	X	X			
Garanden Ward	X		X	X	
Hastings Ward		X	X	X	

How would you rate the overall accessibility of the open spaces i.e. how easy to get to or use?

- 4.30 When the parishes and wards were asked about the accessibility of different types of open space, the typology which is identified as being least accessible is allotments and community gardens.
- 4.31 In terms of parishes and wards where accessibility for more than one type of green space has been identified an issue, it appears that Sileby, East Goscote and the two wards of Garendon and Hastings in Loughborough have the least good provision.
- 4.32 These findings are summarised in the table in Figure 21.

*Figure 21: Locations with poor accessibility to open space*

Parish Council/ Loughborough Ward	Open space types considered to have too little accessibility in that parish/ward				
	Parks & Gardens	Children's play incl teenage	Natural Greenspace and Green Corridors	Allotments and Community Gardens	Churchyards and Cemeteries
Anstey Parish Council				x	
Barrow Upon Soar Parish Council				x	
East Goscote Parish Council			x	x	x
Mountsorrel Parish Council				x	
Queniborough Parish Office				x	
Rothley Parish Council				x	x
Sileby Parish Council		x	x	x	x
Syston Town Council		x	x		
Thurcaston and Cropston Parish Council	x			x	
Thurmaston Parish Council				x	
Walton on the Wolds Parish Council				x	
Garanden Ward	x		x	x	
Hastings Ward		x	x	x	

## The matrix of provision

- 4.33 On some occasions, a return may have identified that there is too little provision although the accessibility is acceptable, for example Mountsorrel suggest that there is too little play provision, though what it has is accessible. Similarly, with regards to natural greenspace in Queniborough, and with parks and gardens, children’s play and churchyards and cemeteries in Quorn.
- 4.34 The open spaces testing will therefore consider both the amount of provision and its accessibility as well as quality issues. The emerging standards will reflect the outcomes of the testing and take into account feedback from the parishes consultation.

## Specific projects

- 4.35 A small number of specific projects have been flagged by the parishes and wards. These are given in the table below, Figure 22.

*Figure 22: Specific open space projects (Parish Councils)*

Parish Council/ Loughborough Ward	Project
Barrow Upon Soar	King George V Restoration Project  Improvements to the park including children’s play. Work is currently in hand (2017).
Mountsorrel	Provision of additional allotment site with approximately 60 plots. Site included in the Halstead Road development
Quorn	Maintenance and development of the Stafford Orchard Park. £20,000 funded by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund  A potential site has been identified for allotments but the evidence of need is awaited prior to the development.
Rearsby	The possible transfer of open space from new development to the Parish Council is currently (2017) being negotiated.
Rothley	Development of new skate park Timescales are to be confirmed and will depend on when S106 monies are released.  Linking of green corridors and accesses opened up by removing sections of fences and installing gates to make routes. By 2022  Enhance / improve the community orchard. In 2019

Shepshed	Install new skate park Timescales are to be confirmed and will depend on when S106 monies are released.
Syston	New children's playground at Winfield Park in 2018 £40,000 - Applying for S106 monies  Need for youth shelter identified, but no project yet in hand.
Thurmaston	Children's play enhancement at Elizabeth Park  There is an identified need for allotments (there are none in the parish currently) but no site has been identified that might be deliverable.
Woodhouse	Enhance children's play provision – no specific project has been identified to date.
Garendon Ward	Development of orchard in Stapleford Park on the site of the previous children's playground.
Hastings Ward	Pocket park on Peel Drive

4.36 Charnwood Borough Council also have a number of open space projects in their capital programme and these are identified below in Figure 23.

*Figure 23: Specific Open Space Projects (Charnwood Borough Council)*

Location	Project
Cambridge Street, Loughborough	Facility for pre-school children (£12,000 to be completed by March 2018)
Bell Foundry Pocket Park, Loughborough	Landscaping and footpaths (£60,000)
Churchyard Walls	Repair and maintain churchyard walls across the borough (£156,000 to be completed March 2018)
Kirkstone Drive Play Area, Loughborough	Upgrade play area (£52,000 to be completed March 2018)
Park Road, Loughborough	Refurbish courts and enhanced site utilisation (£108,000 to be completed March 2018)
Sidings Park, Loughborough	New paths (£75,000 to be completed by March 2019)
Southfields Park, Loughborough	Paths, signage, seating (£150,000 to be completed by March 2019)
Jubilee Park, Loughborough	Phase 1 complete (£50,000 to be completed March 2019)
Great Central Community Park, Loughborough	Access and park facilities, mainly fencing and landscaping (£20,000 to be completed March 2019)
Allsopps Lane Open Space, Loughborough	Phase 1, access improvements, signage and landscape works (to be completed March 2019)

## Consultation with key stakeholders

4.17 A wide range of organisations were contacted about the study. Those with individual memberships were asked to circulate the link to the online individual survey, and all of the organisations were asked to provide general comments about open spaces in Charnwood. Only three organisations responded and their comments are collated in this section of the report.

### Natural England

“Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Natural England’s concerns relate primarily to safeguarding protected sites, species and landscapes. It follows that our advice focuses on preventing any adverse impacts on nationally and internationally designated nature conservation sites and green infrastructure provision.

A coherent green infrastructure network is integral to the creation of sustainable communities, providing many social, economic and environmental benefits around recreation, health and wellbeing, biodiversity enhancement, habitat creation, flood alleviation and climate change adaptation.

The National Planning Policy Framework states that local planning authorities should plan *‘positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure’*. The Planning Practice Guidance on Green Infrastructure provides more detail on this.

Urban green space provides multi-functional benefits. It contributes to coherent and resilient ecological networks, allowing species to move around within, and between, towns and the countryside with even small patches of habitat benefitting movement. Urban GI is also recognised as one of the most effective tools available to us in managing environmental risks such as flooding and heat waves. Greener neighbourhoods and improved access to nature can also improve public health and quality of life and reduce environmental inequalities.

In addition to their potential ecological value, greenspaces also help us adapt to changes in climate through their role in reducing the risk of flooding and by cooling the local environment. Where trees are present they also act as filters for air pollution.

Natural greenspaces are important to our quality of life, providing a wide range of benefits for people and the environment. Evidence shows that access to natural greenspaces for fresh air, exercise and quiet contemplation, has benefits for both physical and mental health. Research provides good evidence of reductions in levels of heart disease, obesity and depression where people live close to greenspaces.

Natural England has published information on access to good quality natural greenspace "Nature Nearby: Accessible Natural Greenspace Guidance" to help make this a reality. It describes the amount, quality and level of visitor services that may be required. ANGSt standards indicate that everyone, wherever they live, should have accessible natural greenspace:

- *of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes' walk) from home;*
- *at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home;*
- *one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home; and*
- *one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home; plus*
- *a minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population.*

There may be significant opportunities to retrofit green infrastructure in urban environments. These can be realised through:

- green roof systems and roof gardens;
- green walls to provide insulation or shading and cooling;
- new tree planting or altering the management of land (e.g. management of verges to enhance biodiversity).

You could also consider issues relating to the protection of natural resources, including air quality, ground and surface water and soils within urban design plans.

Further information on GI is include within *The Town and Country Planning Association's "Design Guide for Sustainable Communities"* and their more recent "Good Practice Guidance for Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity".

### *Study response*

- 4.19 The ANGSt standards have been tested for relevance and deliverability in Charnwood. The findings demonstrate that they are not relevant for Charnwood as they are unlikely to be deliverable in most parts of the borough. They are therefore not carried forward in the formal open space standards. The testing can be found in Section 8 of this report.

## Canal and River Trust

### *Response from Development & Engagement Manager*

"Thank you for consulting the Canal & River Trust on the Open Space Review for Charnwood. The East Midlands waterway is responsible for the navigable River Soar through the borough of Charnwood, from just north of bridge 14A near Birstall to a point 500m north of bridge 44A at Zouch.

We have an ongoing programme of planned maintenance to keep the waterway, its towpath and facilities open for all to use. Works within this programme include repairs to navigation structures (e.g. lock, bridges etc) as well as regular towpath maintenance including mowing and cutting back vegetation. In addition, we plan to install life rings at Loughborough Basin, re-plant a hedge at Barrow Deep Lock and install a new noticeboard at Birstall Lock. Works are always planned to minimise disruption to visitors and we provide notices to inform visitors of forthcoming works. Occasionally it is necessary to close a section of waterway or towpath for public safety while the works are being completed.

Our inspections programme has identified several areas throughout the borough where the towpath could be improved. These works will be undertaken when resources are available and we would be interested in partnership working to secure funding as and when opportunities arise. I am not aware of any funding sources that we are considering for improvement works at this time but have copied in our Enterprise Manager, Simon Papprell, who may be able to advise further.

We work closely with local community groups and currently support three adoption groups within the borough at Mountsorrel, Cossington and Loughborough. These groups carry out a range of agreed works to maintain and improve the waterway for all visitors. We are actively seeking more groups to adopt additional stretches of waterway across our region and would be interested to hear from any groups with an interest in working with us.

We do not currently have any plans for larger scale works within the borough. If you would like to discuss any of the points raised in this email, please contact either myself or Sean McGinley, waterway manager.”

### *Response from Area Planner (East and West Midlands)*

“Within Charnwood we own and operate over 25km of the River Soar/Grand Union Canal Navigation, and both the waterway and the towpath are valuable leisure and recreational resources for both local communities and visitors. The Open Space Review should consider the role that canal towpaths can play in providing a traffic-free environment for walkers and cyclists both for commuting and for leisure and recreation. The waterway itself is also a leisure resource, used for sporting activities such as rowing and canoeing. Ease of access to the waterway is important in encouraging local communities to utilise this valuable resource, which can contribute positively towards improving health and wellbeing in the wider population of the Borough.

Any open space strategy should include consideration of the role that the River Soar/Grand Union Canal can play, and in particular, we consider that new development proposals adjacent or near to canal towpaths should consider whether the provision of new or improved access to the towpath could make a positive contribution towards supporting greater use of it as a sustainable walking and cycling route, as well as encouraging healthier lifestyles.

Whilst the Trust is keen to identify opportunities to improve access to and use of our waterways, we also consider that new development proposals should also identify the extent of any improvements as may be needed to the towpath surface to enable it to fulfil such a role without significantly increasing the Trust's maintenance liabilities. We maintain towpaths according to their current levels of usage, and where new development is likely to result in increased use of the towpath, the Trust expects Developers to contribute towards any improvements required. It would be helpful if this were reflected in any open space strategy, to help ensure that future development proposals are required to have proper regard to these matters.

We would be happy to discuss any matters in more detail- including the Council's own views and aspirations for improving the quality of open space within the Borough and access to it and where there may be areas of common interest for us to potentially pursue in order to help ensure that our waterway can fulfil its potential as a valuable multi-functional open space resource benefitting the community."

#### *Study response*

- 4.33 The comments of the Canal and River Trust are noted. Where proposals emerge to improve / link to the waterways, then the actions include detailed specific consultation with the Canals & Waterways Trust.

#### **Garendon Park & Countryside Protection Group (GPCPG)**

"The Group has fought to save this site for over 30 yrs. Alas we failed to do so. To have input as a GPCPG member would be pointless as Charnwood BC recently gave outline planning permission for 3,200 dwellings, plus associated shops, schools etc."

#### *Study response*

- 4.41 The Borough Council has granted outline planning permission subject to a Section 106 Agreement. The Agreement will include a scheme to allow for public access to Garendon Registered Park which up to now has had no public access.

## SECTION 5: PARKS AND GARDENS

5.1 The Parks and Gardens typology includes town parks, formal gardens and pocket parks. The larger parks provide accessible, high quality open space to be enjoyed by the general public, for a range of formal and informal activities. Pocket Parks are generally maintained by community groups to promote the wildlife value of the site, often providing recreation opportunities such as pond dipping, bird watching and picnics.

5.2 The definition of this typology in the Open Spaces Strategy 2013 was:

*These range from major parks to small memorial gardens – often used for informal recreation and community events. These may include paths, benches, footpaths, tree and shrub planting, formal gardens, close mown grass for ball games / picnics etc, play areas, facilities for young people, and toilets.*

5.3 As Parks and Gardens are multi-functional green spaces they are more likely to be a specific destination, compared to smaller open spaces closer to home. They are often high value spaces which can act as an important focal point in a community, contributing towards the identity of an area and a sense of place. Larger parks can have an important focus at the neighbourhood scale, while small parks can have a more local focus. Parks and Gardens offer a number of activities within a designed space and function as important social venues for individuals and groups.

5.4 As these sites are multifunctional the total area of each Park or Garden is taken as including the separate areas of any facilities within them, such as children's play areas, tennis courts, or football pitches. Some of these facilities are also addressed separately within this report, for example: children's play and teenage facilities.

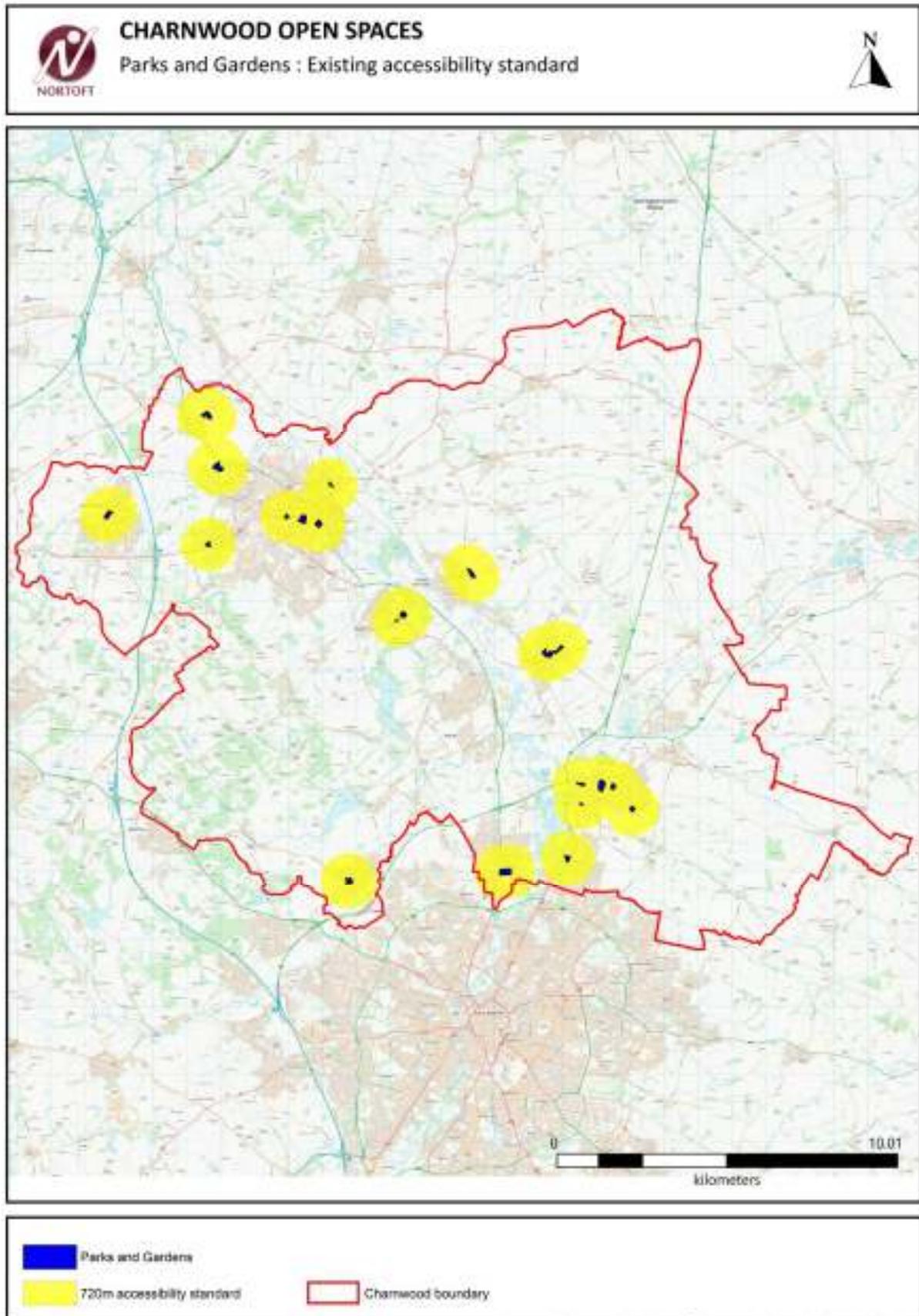
### Current provision and assessment

5.5 There are 20 sites across Charnwood which meet the criteria to be included in the Parks and Gardens typology. Figure 8 provides an overview of these sites across the district.

5.6 A walking catchment of 720m (the current adopted standard, based on a 15 minute walk) has been applied to each of the parishes and wards in order to show the accessibility at a local level (Figure 24).

5.7 Parks and gardens which are outside of the district boundary within other authorities are too far away to provide any significant extra coverage of this typology for the residents of the authority.

Figure 24: Parks and Gardens across Charnwood with existing accessibility



## Stakeholder survey

- 5.9 The Individuals survey asked a number of questions related to Parks and Gardens within the district.
- 5.10 Parks and gardens are the second most used facility type in Charnwood, but only about 38% of people use this space on a weekly basis. About half of the survey respondents use these spaces on a monthly basis or less frequently.
- 5.11 Most people feel that there are enough formal parks and gardens and they are of some importance to most people. About 33% of respondents felt that the spaces were fine as they are, but 31% want improved maintenance, and 28% more of these spaces. More activities in these spaces would also be welcomed. There is some need for improved safety, but this was only flagged by about 18% of the respondents.
- 5.12 A 15 minute travel time is expected to formal parks and gardens, with around 60% walking and 30% travelling by car. Use of bikes and buses to reach the parks were not really seen as ideal (less than 10%) but this could in part be due to the ages of the respondents.

## Testing the existing standards

- 5.12 The existing adopted standards for Parks and Gardens are:

*Figure 25: Existing adopted standards for Parks and Gardens*

	Quantity per 1000 people	Accessibility
Parks and Gardens	0.32ha	720m

- 5.13 The testing of the existing standards in relation to quantity and accessibility is summarised in Figure 26 for the Loughborough wards, the Leicester Principal Urban Area, towns and service centres within Charnwood. Testing of existing standards for all other parishes and wards is provided in Appendix 6.

## Quantity

- 5.14 The existing quantity standard for Parks and Gardens of 0.32 ha per 1000 is only achieved in 2 of the 10 Loughborough wards; Dishley and Southfields. Of the 8 remaining wards, 6 do not have a Park and Garden within their boundary. The 2 wards which have a Park and Garden, but do not meet the existing quantity standard are Ashby and Lemington.

- 5.15 Birstall and Thurmaston both have a park and garden within their boundary. However, only Birstall has a surplus in provision, with Thurmaston requiring an additional 1.34 ha if it were to meet the existing standard.
- 5.16 The service centres display a better provision of Parks and Gardens, with 5 of the 7 settlements having a theoretical surplus in provision compared to the standard. For Syston and Sileby, this 'surplus' in provision is relatively significant; at 3.14 ha and 4.87 ha respectively. The final two service centres; Rothley and Mountsorrel, do not have a Park and Garden within their boundary.
- 5.17 With the exception of Hathern, all of the remaining settlements do not have a park and garden within their boundary. Hathern has a surplus in provision equivalent to 2.82 ha.
- 5.18 The existing standard was based on the average district wide quantity provision of Parks and Gardens at the time. The current average district wide quantity provision is 0.29 ha.
- 5.19 The fall in average provision is a result of the increased population within the borough, as well as the reclassification of a few sites to other typologies such as Amenity Green Space.

Figure 26: Existing standards testing for Parks and Gardens

Parish/Ward	Population	Existing Provision (total ha)	Existing Provision standard (ha / 1000 popn)	Existing provision per 1000 popn	Applying provision standard (surplus or deficit / 1000 popn)	Impact of applied provision standard (surplus or deficit by total ha)	Accessibility of main settlement (15 min walk/720m)
Loughborough Ashby Ward	6487	1.32	0.32	0.20	-0.12	-0.76	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Dishley	4195	4.28	0.32	1.02	0.70	2.93	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Garendon Ward	5829	0.00	0.32	0.00	-0.32	-1.87	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Hastings Ward	6004	0.00	0.32	0.00	-0.32	-1.92	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Lemyngton Ward	6504	0.75	0.32	0.12	-0.20	-1.33	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Nanpantan Ward	5440	0.00	0.32	0.00	-0.32	-1.74	No accessibility coverage
Loughborough Outwoods Ward	5697	0.00	0.32	0.00	-0.32	-1.82	No accessibility coverage
Loughborough Shelthorpe Ward	7416	0.00	0.32	0.00	-0.32	-2.37	No accessibility coverage
Loughborough Southfields Ward	6725	7.23	0.32	1.08	0.76	5.08	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Storer Ward	6070	0.00	0.32	0.00	-0.32	-1.94	Partial accessibility coverage

Parish/Ward	Population	Existing Provision (total ha)	Existing Provision standard (ha / 1000 popn)	Existing provision per 1000 popn	Applying provision standard (surplus or deficit / 1000 popn)	Impact of applied provision standard (surplus or deficit by total ha)	Accessibility of main settlement (15 min walk/720m)
Shepshed CP	13505	2.80	0.32	0.21	-0.11	-1.53	Partial accessibility coverage
Birstall CP	12216	5.59	0.32	0.46	0.14	1.68	Partial accessibility coverage
Thurmaston CP	9668	1.75	0.32	0.18	-0.14	-1.34	Partial accessibility coverage
Anstey CP	6528	3.00	0.32	0.46	0.14	0.91	Partial accessibility coverage
Barrow upon Soar CP	5956	2.38	0.32	0.40	0.08	0.48	Partial accessibility coverage
Mountsorrel CP	8223	0.00	0.32	0.00	-0.32	-2.63	No accessibility coverage
Quorndon CP	5177	2.30	0.32	0.44	0.12	0.65	Partial accessibility coverage
Rothley CP	3897	0.00	0.32	0.00	-0.32	-1.25	No accessibility coverage
Sileby CP	7835	5.78	0.32	0.74	0.42	3.28	Partial accessibility coverage
Syston CP	12804	9.33	0.32	0.73	0.41	5.24	Partial accessibility coverage

## Accessibility

- 5.70 The existing accessibility standard for Parks and Gardens of 720m does not provide a complete coverage for all residents in any of the towns, Leicester Principal Urban Area or service centres.
- 5.71 3 of the Loughborough wards (Nanpantan, Outwoods and Shelthorpe) have no coverage when tested against the existing accessibility standard. A further 2 service centres (Mountsorrel and Rothley) also do not have any coverage from the existing accessibility.
- 5.72 All other wards and service centres have at least a partial coverage from the existing accessibility standard, however many have substantial gaps.
- 5.73 Dishley, Hastings and Southfields wards as well as Birstall, Thurmaston, Syston and Quorndon all have an accessibility that covers the vast majority of their residents.

## Quality

- 5.74 Green Flag is the current formal quality standard for Parks and Gardens, and has proved a useful assessment tool. For Parks and Gardens, the criteria used for quality relates to six areas:
- A Welcoming Place
  - Healthy, Safe and Secure
  - Well Maintained and Clean
  - Conservation and Heritage
  - Community Involvement
  - Marketing
- 5.75 The average quality scores for the Parks and Gardens sites are provided in Figure 27.

*Figure 27: Parks and Gardens quality scores*

Category	Average quality score
<i>A welcoming place</i>	46%
<i>Health, safety and security</i>	53%
<i>Well maintained and clean</i>	93%
<i>Conservation and heritage</i>	78%
<i>Community involvement</i>	52%
<i>Marketing</i>	33%
<i>Ecosystem Services</i>	48%

- 5.76 The quality criteria for the Parks and Gardens is based on the Green Flag principles, and the scores varied widely between sites. However, with the exception of

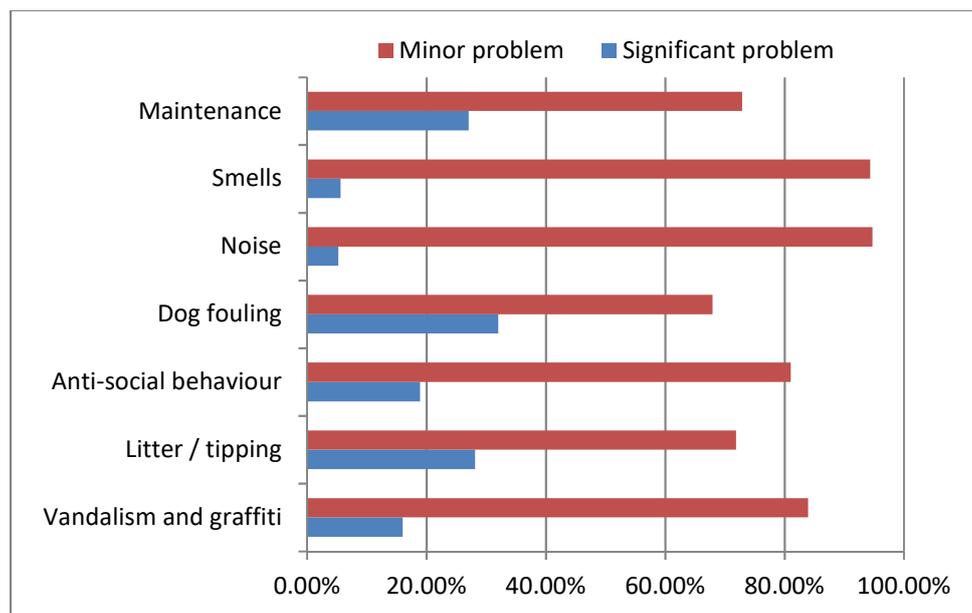
marketing, the average scores indicate an acceptable quality score across all categories.

**5.27** 7 sites did not receive a score for marketing as each site did not have any information for users, notice boards or any programme of events occurring at the Park and Garden. This would therefore reduce the overall average quality score within the marketing section.

**5.28** All sites scored very highly for being well maintained and clean as well as for conservation and heritage.

**5.29** The Individuals survey asked respondents whether they experienced any quality issues at the open space they visited most frequently. Overall 61% of respondents had experienced issues with the quality of the spaces. As Parks and Gardens are one of the most important open space types, the results are particularly relevant. The responses are shown in Figure 28. Smells, noise anti-social behaviour and vandalism and graffiti were most commonly experienced.

*Figure 28: Quality issues highlighted by Individual survey*



**5.30** Sites which were flagged for having quality issues for at least one of the Green Flag categories relevant to Parks and Gardens are listed in Figure 29. The Green Flag criteria for marketing has consistently flagged sites as poor.

Figure 29: Parks and Gardens with quality issues

Site ID	Site Name	A welcoming place	Health, safety and security	Community involvement	Marketing
204	Radmoor Road, Loughborough	X			X
209	Shortcliffe Park, Loughborough	X		X	X
212	Southfields Park, Loughborough				X
214	Pear Tree Lane, Loughborough	X			X
317	High Street, Quorndon		X		
386	Sedgefield Drive, Syston				X
387	Archdale Street, Syston				X
550	Memorial Park, Sileby				X

## Testing alternative standards

### Assessment criteria

- 5.31 The assessment considers alternatives based on current practice nationally, and on the adopted standards across Charnwood benchmark comparator authorities.

### Fields in Trust

- 5.32 Fields in Trust (FiT) has recently begun reviewing its own standards, and the findings of a national survey of local authorities in England and Wales was provided in their report *Review of the Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play, Phase 2 Survey Findings for England and Wales* (January 2015). The report states that the median level of provision for *local* parks and gardens was 0.8 ha per 1000. The accessibility element of the standards was a median of 710m, but varied from as little as 300m for local/pocket parks to 4,300m for major urban and country parks. If measured by walking time, the median was 15 minutes walk from home.

- 5.33 The Fields in Trust has now recommended within their report *Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard, England* (October 2015) a minimum quantity guideline of 0.8 Ha per 1000, with an accessibility standard of 710m walking catchment (approximately 9 minutes walk).

- 5.34 The quality recommendation in the FiT October 2015 report for Parks and Gardens is:

- Parks to be of Green Flag status

- Appropriately landscaped
- Positive management
- Provision of footpaths
- Designed so as to be free of the fear of harm or crime

### Comparators

5.35 The CIPFA benchmark authorities show that Charnwood’s standards are much lower than the comparators authorities, see Figure 30.

Figure 30: Comparators for Parks and Gardens

	Parks and Gardens	
	Quantity (Ha per 1000)	Access (m) [adopted in Open Space Strategy 2009]
Charnwood	0.32	720m or 15 minute walk. 10 minute drive time in rural settlements.
<b>CIPFA comparators</b>		
Broxtowe	Minimum size of 1ha	500m
Colchester	1.76	720m (15 min walk)
Huntingdonshire	0.48	720m (15 min walk)
Stafford	1.5 Urban. 1.1 Rural (General open space)	600m (10 minute walk)

### Quantity

5.36 Given that:

- The existing quantity standard for Parks and Gardens is based on the district wide provision;
- The CIPFA comparators have very different standards;
- Parks and Gardens also function as Amenity Green Spaces, as residents are likely to access their nearest sites regardless of its typology;
- open space on new developments (excluding large scale SUEs etc.) are unlikely to require the inclusion of a formal Park and Garden due to size and cost;

It is therefore appropriate to consider a combined quantity standard for Parks and Gardens and Amenity Green Space. This is explored in Section 7.

## Quality

**5.37** The Green Flag criteria are the most appropriate quality standards for Parks and Gardens and achieving or maintaining a Green Flag status should be the goal for all Parks and Gardens. The relevant criteria for parks and gardens are:

- A Welcoming Place
- Healthy, Safe and Secure
- Well Maintained and Clean
- Conservation and Heritage
- Community Involvement
- Marketing

**5.38** The 2013 Open Spaces Strategy also contains quality standards for adoption of Parks and Gardens and these have been taken forward.

## Accessibility

**5.39** The existing accessibility standard of 720m (based on a 15min walk) does not provide a complete coverage for all residents in any of the Loughborough wards, towns or service centres.

**5.40** There is still a need to retain a separate standard for Parks and Gardens to recognise their importance as a destination venue. Analysing feedback from the various consultations specifically undertaken for this project, considering emerging best practice and Charnwood's comparator authorities, a 1200m walking accessibility is proposed. This is still equivalent to a 15 minute walk but using the FiT guidelines for distance/travel time.

## Proposed standards for Parks and Gardens

**5.41** As has been outlined above, the existing standards for Parks and Gardens do not accurately reflect the current provision for this typology. Furthermore, comparison between the existing standards and Charnwood's comparator authorities highlights a considerable variety of both the quantity and accessibility of Parks and Gardens. It is therefore appropriate to review the standards.

**5.42** Figure 31 provides a summary of the testing of the proposed quantity and accessibility standards for Parks and Gardens.

**5.43** The proposed quantity standard of 0.8ha per 1000 is based on the Fields in Trust recommended quantity standard. The outcome of the increased quantity standard can be seen in Figure 31.

- 5.44** Only 2 of the Loughborough wards, towns and service centres have a sufficient provision to meet the proposed standard; Loughborough Dishley and Loughborough Southfields.
- 5.45** The 5 service centres that had sufficient quantity for the existing standard now show a theoretical deficit when applying the proposed 0.8ha per 1000 standard.
- 5.46** Both Birstall and Thurmaston now show a deficit in the provision of Park and Gardens.
- 5.47** The increase in accessibility from 720m to 1200m has significantly improved resident's accessibility to Parks and Gardens. With the exception of Mountsorrel, all Loughborough wards, towns and service centres now have at least a partial accessibility coverage.
- 5.48** 5 of the Loughborough wards, Thurmaston and 4 service centres all now have a complete coverage from the proposed 1200m accessibility.
- 5.49** The proposed accessibility standard for Parks and Gardens is illustrated in Figure 32.
- 5.50** The new proposed standards are provided in Section 7.

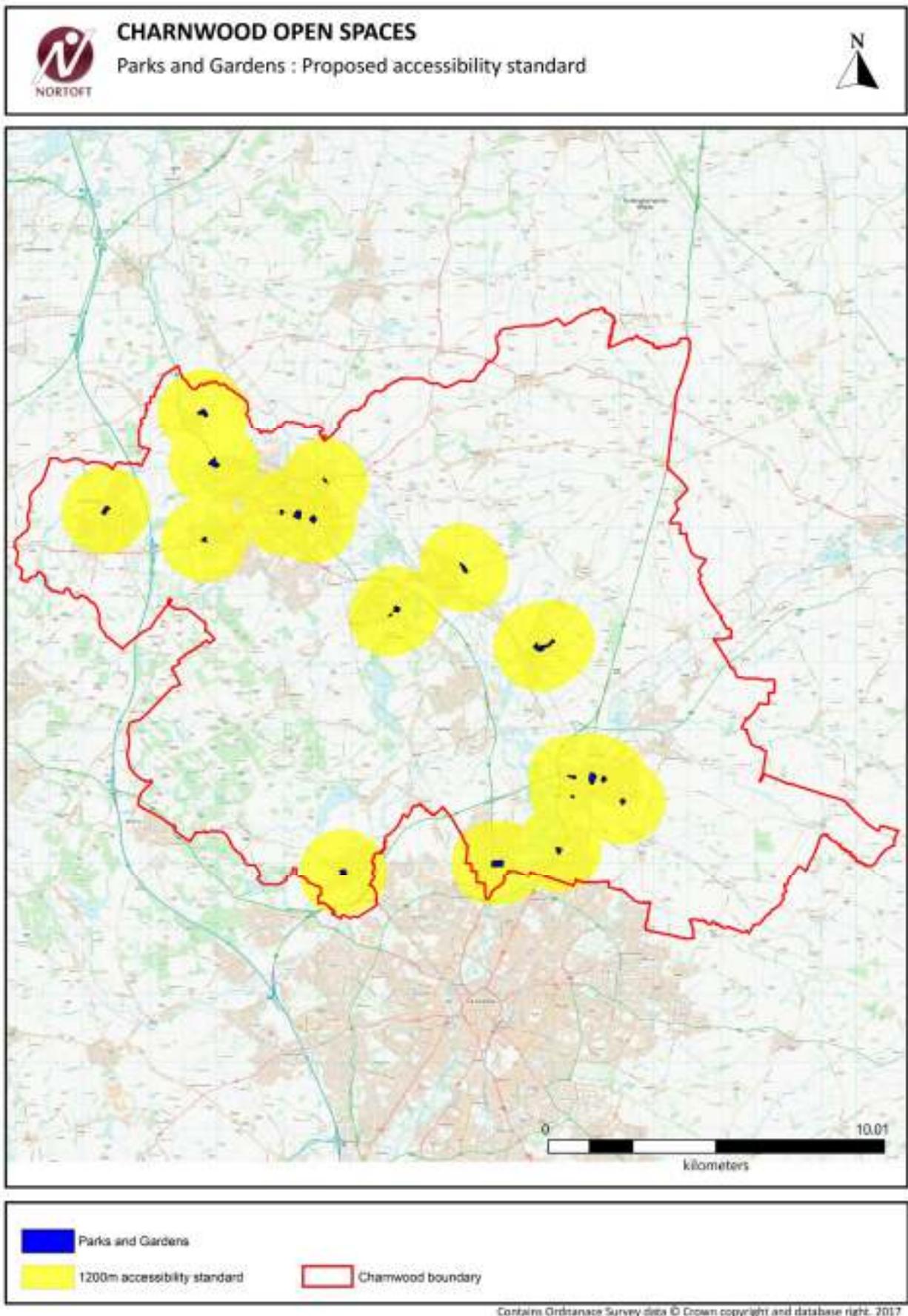
Figure 31: Proposed standard testing for Parks and Gardens

Parish/Ward	Population	Existing Provision (total ha)	Proposed quantity standard (ha / 1000 population)	Existing provision per 1000 population	Applying provision standard (surplus or deficit / 1000 population)	Impact of applied provision standard (surplus or deficit by total ha)	Proposed accessibility standard - 1200m
Loughborough Ashby Ward	6487	1.32	0.8	0.20	-0.60	-3.87	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Dishley	4195	4.28	0.8	1.02	0.22	0.92	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Garendon Ward	5829	0	0.8	0	-0.8	-4.66	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Hastings Ward	6004	0	0.8	0	-0.8	-4.80	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Lemyngton Ward	6504	0.75	0.8	0.12	-0.68	-4.45	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Nanpantan Ward	5440	0	0.8	0	-0.8	-4.35	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Outwoods Ward	5697	0	0.8	0	-0.8	-4.56	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Shelthorpe Ward	7416	0	0.8	0	-0.8	-5.93	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Southfields Ward	6725	7.23	0.8	1.08	0.28	1.85	Full accessibility coverage

Parish/Ward	Population	Existing Provision (total ha)	Proposed quantity standard (ha / 1000 population)	Existing provision per 1000 population	Applying provision standard (surplus or deficit / 1000 population)	Impact of applied provision standard (surplus or deficit by total ha)	Proposed accessibility standard - 1200m
Loughborough Storer Ward	6070	0	0.8	0	-0.8	-4.86	Partial accessibility coverage
Shepshed CP	13505	2.80	0.8	0.21	-0.59	-8.00	Partial accessibility coverage
Birstall CP	12216	5.59	0.8	0.46	-0.34	-4.19	Partial accessibility coverage
Thurmaston CP	9668	1.75	0.8	0.18	-0.62	-5.98	Full accessibility coverage
Anstey CP	6528	3.00	0.8	0.46	-0.34	-2.22	Full accessibility coverage
Barrow upon Soar CP	5956	2.38	0.8	0.40	-0.39	-2.38	Partial accessibility coverage
Mountsorrel CP	8223	0	0.8	0	-0.8	-6.58	No accessibility coverage
Quorndon CP	5177	2.30	0.8	0.44	-0.36	-1.84	Full accessibility coverage
Rothley CP	3897	0	0.8	0	-0.8	-3.12	No accessibility coverage
Sileby CP	7835	5.78	0.8	0.74	-0.06	-0.48	Full accessibility coverage

Parish/Ward	Population	Existing Provision (total ha)	Proposed quantity standard (ha / 1000 population)	Existing provision per 1000 population	Applying provision standard (surplus or deficit / 1000 population)	Impact of applied provision standard (surplus or deficit by total ha)	Proposed accessibility standard - 1200m
System CP	12804	9.33	0.8	0.73	-0.07	-0.91	Full accessibility coverage

Figure 32: Parks and Gardens proposed accessibility standards



## SECTION 6: AMENITY GREEN SPACE

### Typology and best practice

- 6.1 Amenity green spaces are public open spaces whose primary purpose is to improve and enhance the appearance of the local environment and improve the well-being of local residents. Often children's equipped playgrounds whether or not they are fenced, are part of amenity green spaces, and the "informal" unequipped play space which links to children's play provision is integral to the amenity green space.
- 6.2 The definition of this typology in the Open Spaces Strategy 2013 was:  
  
*Most commonly found in housing areas. Includes informal recreation green spaces. Used for informal activities close to home or work, children's casual play, enhancement of the appearance of residential areas.*
- 6.3 The size of a green space is an important factor in the role it plays in the community, as larger spaces tend to support a wider array of activities and are more likely to be a focal point for communities. Smaller green spaces are however still important features to enhance a townscape or village, and to support informal activities. These spaces often have fewer ancillary facilities than large open spaces, and provide less value for local residents.
- 6.4 Very small green spaces, of less than 0.2 ha in size tend not to be practical or usable spaces for recreation. They are often incidental open space within housing developments, and may be roadside verges. These very small areas usually have no ancillary facilities such as seating or any defining landscape features which are designed for play or leisure. Although these spaces are important in terms of design and a sense of place for both existing settlements and new developments, their limitations for amenity use means that emerging best practice now differentiates between amenity green spaces larger than 0.2 ha which have a recreational function, and those below this size which are treated as design features.
- 6.5 Green spaces which are less than 0.2 ha in size and without obvious recreational use, (i.e. not containing a play area for example) have therefore been excluded from this assessment.
- 6.6 The quality of an amenity green space is reflective of the provision and condition of its features and characteristics. The quality reflects what is provided on a site, the condition of facilities, and the immediate surroundings. The higher the quality of amenity green spaces, the more likely people are to use them. Lower quality spaces often have limited facilities and also lack landscaping and planting, they have little positive use, and may be of low or negative value to the community.
- 6.7 The need for new amenity green space often relates to the type of development. A residential development with large gardens will often have a lower need for smaller amenity green spaces compared to high density housing developments or sheltered

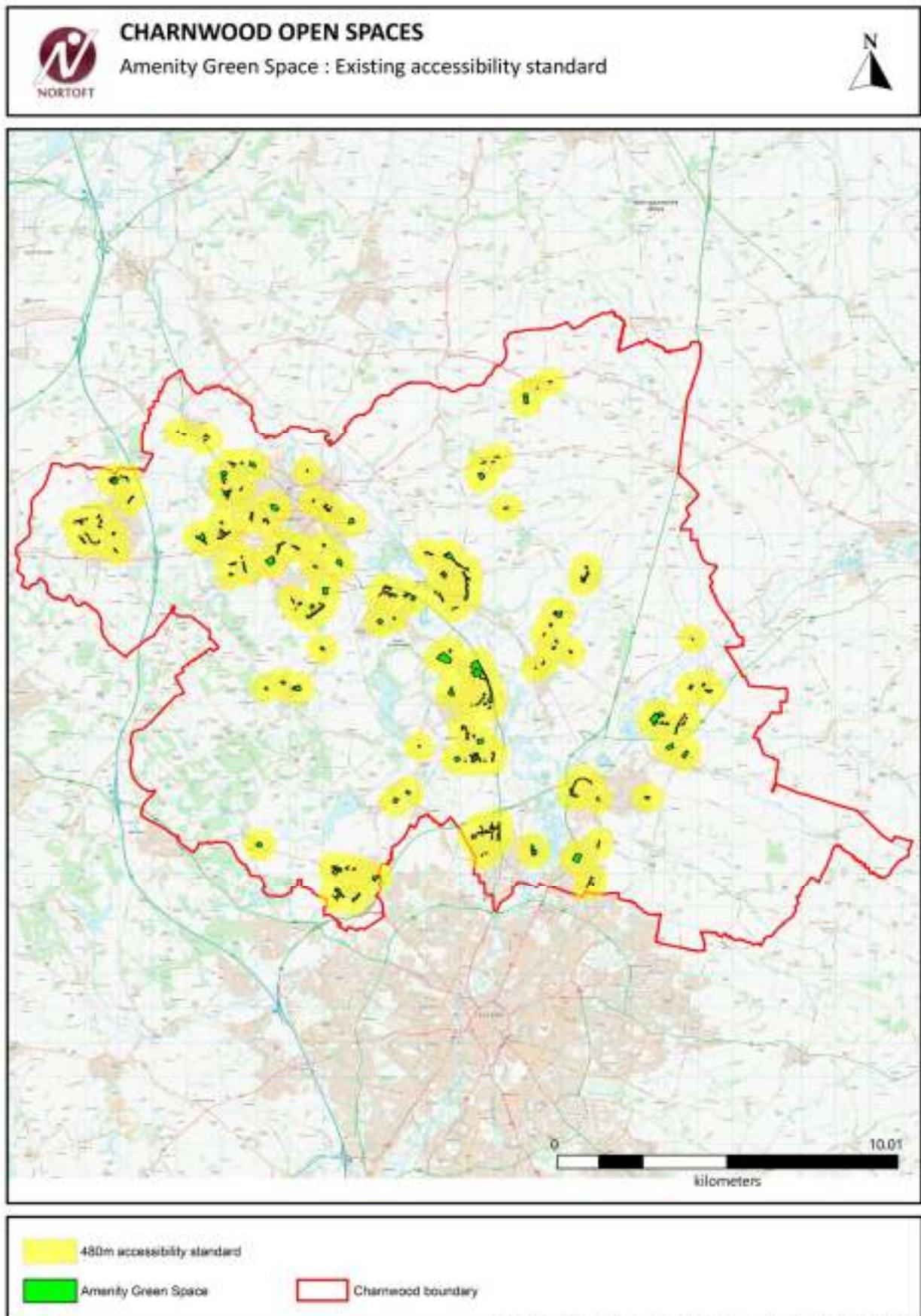
housing, where gardens are sometimes not provided. Both of the latter will however require larger areas of amenity green space.

- 6.9 The need for amenity green space is not limited to housing areas. The landscaping associated with many non-residential developments, such as business parks, should be included in the consideration of need. In these areas, quality is as important as quantity.

## Current provision and assessment

- 6.9 There are a large number of sites across Charnwood which meet the criteria to be included in the Amenity Green Space typology. Figure 33 provides an overview of these sites across the district, showing the existing accessibility standard of 480m.
- 6.10 As with the Parks and Gardens typology, where these sites are multifunctional they also include the physical area of the facilities within them such as children's play areas. These facilities are also considered separately within this report, but as they are integral parts of what makes up the green space, they need to be included in the overall area.
- 6.11 The map in Figure 33 also demonstrates that the distribution of the Amenity Green Spaces across the district is relatively even.

Figure 33: Amenity Green Space across Charnwood with current accessibility



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## Stakeholder consultation

- 6.13** The Individual's survey asked a number of questions relating to accessibility and provision of Amenity Green Space within the district, as follows.
- 6.13** Amenity green spaces are used by over 40% of the survey respondents, with most daily open space visits being to this type of provision. Almost 30% of respondents used these sites on a daily basis, with a further 21% accessing them on a weekly basis.
- 6.14** Over 40% of respondents consider that there is too little amenity green space although access to them is acceptable and they are not seen as very important compared to the other open spaces such as natural greenspace, country parks or formal parks and gardens. There is a clear message about the need for better maintenance and some concerns about safety.
- 6.15** A strong majority of respondents considered that these areas should be accessible within a 5 minute walk.

## Testing the existing standards

- 6.16** The existing standards in Charnwood for Amenity Green Space are:

*Figure 34: Existing adopted standards for Amenity Green Space*

	Quantity per 1000 people	Accessibility
	Urban and Rural	Walking threshold
Amenity Green Space	0.46ha	480m

- 6.17** The testing of the standards in relation to quantity and accessibility are summarised in Figure 35 for the Loughborough wards, towns and service centres. Testing of existing standards for all other parishes are provided in Appendix 6.

## Quantity

- 6.18** Overall the current provision across the district is 1.05 ha per 1000, showing substantial variation from the existing standard of 0.46ha, despite this standard being based on the district wide provision for Amenity Green Space at the time.
- 6.19** The significant variation in district wide provision is not surprising as the previous strategy was based on the now outdated PPG17 guidance. The scope of this report has also changed with the removal of the outdoor sports typology; this has meant many sites that were previously classified as outdoor sports have become amenity green spaces.

- 6.20 Figure 35 provides a summary for the testing of existing standards in the towns and service centres.
- 6.21 5 of the 10 Loughborough wards do not meet the existing quantity standard. However, Hastings, Lemington and Nanpantan wards each require less than 1ha of additional Amenity Green Space to satisfy the existing standard. The total additional Amenity Green Space required for the 5 wards with a deficit in provision is 3.63ha.
- 6.22 Shepshed, Birstall, Thurmaston and 7 of the 8 service centres have a surplus of Amenity Green Space, when compared to the existing standard. The only service centre with a deficit in provision is Syston.
- 6.23 A number of the service centres have an existing provision that significantly exceeds the existing standard. For example, Mountsorrel has over 22 ha of Amenity Green Space.
- 6.24 Of the 24 smaller settlements, 12 do not have any Amenity Green Space within the parish boundary. With the exception of Thrussington, the 12 settlements with an Amenity Green Space all have a surplus in provision.

## Accessibility

- 6.25 All of the towns, the Leicester Principal Urban Area, and service centres have at least partial coverage when testing the existing accessibility standard for Amenity Green Space.
- 6.26 The quantity of Amenity Green Space sites means that the 480m existing accessibility catchment covers all residents in two Loughborough wards; Ashby and Dishley.
- 6.27 In addition to this, two service centres, Barrow Upon Soar and Rothley, also have a full coverage from the existing accessibility.
- 6.28 The current accessibility for the remaining Loughborough wards, Shepshed, Birstall, Thurmaston and the service centres is relatively good. A number have a near complete coverage, with only small gaps (e.g. Anstey and Mountsorrel).
- 6.29 6 of the smaller settlements have a full coverage from the existing accessibility standard. A further 6 settlements have a partial coverage, of which most show that the majority of the settlement is covered by the existing accessibility. The 12 settlements without any Amenity Green Spaces do not have any access to sites within the existing standard of 480m.

Figure 35: Existing standards testing for Amenity Green Space

Parish/Ward	Population	Existing Provision (total ha)	Existing Provision standard (ha / 1000 popn)	Existing provision per 1000 popn	Applying provision standard (surplus or deficit / 1000 popn)	Impact of applied provision standard (surplus or deficit by total ha)	Accessibility of main settlement (10 min walk/480m)
Loughborough Ashby Ward	6487	1.97	0.46	0.30	-0.16	-1.02	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Dishley	4195	4.16	0.46	0.99	0.53	2.23	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Garendon Ward	5829	7.62	0.46	1.31	0.85	4.94	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Hastings Ward	6004	2.76	0.46	0.46	0.00	-0.01	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Lemyngton Ward	6504	2.25	0.46	0.35	-0.11	-0.74	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Nanpantan Ward	5440	2.45	0.46	0.45	-0.01	-0.05	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Outwoods Ward	5697	6.38	0.46	1.12	0.66	3.76	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Shelthorpe Ward	7416	8.53	0.46	1.15	0.69	5.12	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Southfields Ward	6725	1.29	0.46	0.19	-0.27	-1.81	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Storer Ward	6070	2.92	0.46	0.48	0.02	0.13	Partial accessibility coverage

Parish/Ward	Population	Existing Provision (total ha)	Existing Provision standard (ha / 1000 popn)	Existing provision per 1000 popn	Applying provision standard (surplus or deficit / 1000 popn)	Impact of applied provision standard (surplus or deficit by total ha)	Accessibility of main settlement (10 min walk/480m)
Shepshed CP	13505	10.24	0.46	0.76	0.30	4.03	Partial accessibility coverage
Birstall CP	12216	9.91	0.46	0.81	0.35	4.29	Partial accessibility coverage
Thurmaston CP	9668	5.00	0.46	0.52	0.06	0.55	Partial accessibility coverage
Anstey CP	6528	9.08	0.46	1.39	0.93	6.07	Partial accessibility coverage
Barrow upon Soar CP	5956	12.39	0.46	2.08	1.62	9.65	Full accessibility coverage
Mountsorrel CP	8223	22.75	0.46	2.77	2.31	18.97	Partial accessibility coverage
Quorndon CP	5177	5.47	0.46	1.06	0.60	3.09	Partial accessibility coverage
Rothley CP	3897	13.63	0.46	3.50	3.04	11.83	Full accessibility coverage
Sileby CP	7835	4.82	0.46	0.62	0.16	1.22	Partial accessibility coverage
Syston CP	12804	3.31	0.46	0.26	-0.20	-2.58	Partial accessibility coverage

## Quality

6.30 As with Parks and Gardens, Amenity Green Spaces have been assessed against the Green Flag criteria. The criteria used in the site assessments were:

- A welcoming place
- Health, safety and security
- Well maintained and clean
- Conservation and Heritage
- Community Involvement
- Ecosystem services

6.31 The average quality scores for Amenity Green Spaces are provided in Figure 36. The significant variety in the type of sites classified as Amenity Green Space will typically produce a range of quality scores. It is not appropriate for Amenity Green Spaces to be tested against all of the Green Flag criteria in the same way in which Parks and Gardens are so the relevant criteria have been included in the table below.

*Figure 36: Average quality scores for Amenity Green Space*

Category	Average quality score
<i>A welcoming place</i>	61%
<i>Health, safety and security</i>	64%
<i>Well maintained and clean</i>	58%
<i>Ecosystem services</i>	50%

6.32 All the Amenity Green Space sites where quality issues were flagged as 'poor' in at least two categories are provided in Figure 37. It is clear that where a site has been flagged for being poor, 'Well maintained and clean' is consistently an issue for overall site quality.

Figure 37: Amenity Green Space with quality issues

Site ID	Site Name	A welcoming place	Health, safety and security	Well maintained and clean
107	Epinal Way/Beacon Road (Loughborough Southfields Ward)		X	X
197	Castledine Street Extension (Loughborough Southfields Ward)	X	X	X
236	Leicester Road (Thurcaston and Cropston CP)	X	X	X
243	Land east of Brackenfield Way (Thurmaston CP)	X		X
273	Garland (Rothley CP)	X		X
277	Off Hallfields Lane (Rothley CP)		X	X
290	A6 Mountsorrel Bypass (Mountsorrel/Rothley CP)	X	X	X
293	Kingfisher Road (Mountsorrel CP)	X	X	X
302	Hawcliffe Road (Mountsorrel CP)	X	X	X
374	Land east of Wolsey Way (Syston CP)	X	X	X
407	Hubbard Road (Burton on the Wolds CP)	X	X	X
432	Derby Road (Hathern CP)	X	X	X
557	Edward Phillips Road AGS (Hathern CP)		X	X
568	Lammas Drive Open Space (Hathern CP)		X	X
571	Manor Holt Close AGS (Rothley CP)	X	X	X
582	Warren Way AGS (Rothley CP)		X	X

## Testing alternative standards

### Assessment criteria

6.34 The assessment considers current practice nationally, and the adopted standards across Charnwood's benchmark comparator authorities.

### Fields in Trust

6.34 The Fields in Trust's review of its own standards, the Review of the Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play, Phase 2 Survey Findings for England and Wales (January 2015), identified 0.55 ha per 1000 as the median level of provision for amenity green space. The accessibility standard varied widely, from 120m through to 800m, but the median accessibility standard was 480m.

6.35 The Fields in Trust has now recommended within the report *Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard, England* (October 2015) a minimum quantity guideline for Amenity Green Space of 0.6 Ha per 1000, with an accessibility standard of 480m walking catchment (approximately a 6 minute walk). There is no differentiation between urban and rural areas.

6.36 The adopted standard for Amenity Green Space in Charnwood is lower than the FiT recommended rate of provision.

6.37 The quality recommendation in the FiT October 2015 report for Amenity Green Space is the same as for the Parks and Gardens typology, but without the recommendation that the sites should achieve Green Flag status. The quality guidelines are therefore that sites are/have:

- Appropriately landscaped
- Positive management
- Provision of footpaths
- Designed so as to be free of the fear of harm or crime

### Comparators

6.38 The range of quantity standards adopted by the CIPFA benchmark authorities are considerably higher than Charnwood's adopted standard. Colchester and Huntingdonshire have standards of 1.1ha and 1.09ha respectively, with Stafford using a combined standard for informal open space of 1.5ha urban areas and 1.1ha for rural areas. Broxtowe provide a minimum size standard for each parcel of open space and are therefore not comparable.

6.39 The accessibility standards in terms of metres, between the CIPFA benchmark authorities displays a consistency, with all comparators using either a 300m or 480m accessibility. This is given as either a 5 minute or 10 minute walk.

Figure 38: Comparators for Amenity Green Space

	Parks and Gardens	
	Quantity (Ha per 1000)	Access (m) [adopted in Open Space Strategy 2009]
Charnwood	0.46	480m walk
<b>CIPFA comparators</b>		
Broxtowe	0.25	300m
Colchester	1.1	480m
Huntingdonshire	1.09	480m
Stafford	1.5 Urban. 1.1 Rural (General open space)	300m

6.40 These comparisons suggest that the current Amenity Green Space accessibility standard for Charnwood is within the “normal” range. However, the quantity standard is in need of review.

#### Emerging best practice

6.41 A key consideration in assessing the availability of amenity green space within an authority is the practical usefulness of each of the spaces for informal recreation. To date there is no formal guidance about this, but there is emerging good practice which suggests that to be useful space, the amenity green space should be:

- 0.2 ha or greater in size, or have a clear amenity use, for example children’s play
- Have natural grass on a high proportion of the site
- Permanently available for informal public recreation use
- Reasonably flat and accessible to the local community
- Safe for use by a wide range of ages
- Clearly designed, with definition between the public space and adjoining private spaces e.g. fenced
- Provided with facilities, including as appropriate, children’s equipped play, seating, and kick about area.
- Not be primarily a playing field, sustainable urban drainage site, roadside verge, or landscaping as part of a development.

6.42 Where a children’s play facility is clearly part of the amenity green space area and meets these criteria, its area has been included within the overall total for amenity green space.

## Quantity

6.45 Given that:

- the existing quantity standards do not reflect the current provision of Amenity Green Space;
- The CIPFA comparators have very different standards;
- Parks and Gardens also function as Amenity Green Spaces, as residents are likely to access their nearest site regardless of its typology.

It is therefore appropriate to consider a combined quantity standard for Parks and Gardens and Amenity Green Space. This is explored in Section 7.

## Quality

6.46 Green Flag is the current formal quality standard for Amenity Green Space, and has proved a useful assessment tool. For Amenity Green Space, the relevant Green Flag criteria is used as a basis for the proposed as the quality standard.

6.47 These are reflected in the quality standards set down in the 2013 Open Spaces Strategy, and these have been taken forward.

## Accessibility

6.48 Amenity Green Space accessibility is relatively good across both the towns and service centres. The existing accessibility standard of 480m states it is based on a 10 minute walk, however the FiT guidelines for walking distances indicate that a 10 minute walk is actually equivalent to 800m.

6.49 However, after considering the responses from the various consultations specifically undertaken for this project, emerging best practice, Charnwood's comparator authorities and the localised importance of Amenity Green Space, a 400m accessibility is proposed. This is equivalent to a 5 minute walk using the FiT guidelines of 400m per 5 minutes.

6.50 The proposed accessibility standard can also be applied to all Parks and Gardens. By their very nature Parks and Gardens can also be classed as Amenity Green Spaces as they share many of the same site attributes, and are often located in areas where there are fewer Amenity Green Space sites.

## Proposed standards for Amenity Green Space

6.51 As has been outlined in the previous section, the existing standards for Amenity Green Space do not accurately reflect the current situation for this typology.

6.52 Figure 39 provides a summary of the testing for both the proposed quantity and accessibility standards.

- 8.51 The proposed quantity standards are based on the Fields in Trust recommended standards of provision for Amenity Green Space. At 0.6 ha per 1000, this represents an increase of 0.12 ha per 1000 above the existing standard. However, as the current average provision across Charnwood is already higher at 1.05 ha per 1000, this increase is justified. This will mean that more open space would potentially be provided and people won't have to walk so long to get to their nearest space.
- 8.52 See Section 7 for further details.

Figure 39: Proposed standards testing for Amenity Green Space

Parish/Ward	Population	Existing Provision (total ha)	Proposed quantity standard (ha / 1000 popn)	Existing provision per 1000 popn	Applying provision standard (surplus or deficit / 1000 popn)	Impact of applied provision standard (surplus or deficit by total ha)	Accessibility of main settlement (5 min walk/400m)
Loughborough Ashby Ward	6487	1.97	0.6	0.30	-0.30	-1.92	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Dishley	4195	4.16	0.6	0.99	0.39	1.65	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Garendon Ward	5829	7.62	0.6	1.31	0.71	4.13	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Hastings Ward	6004	2.76	0.6	0.46	-0.14	-0.85	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Lemyngton Ward	6504	2.25	0.6	0.35	-0.25	-1.65	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Nanpantan Ward	5440	2.45	0.6	0.45	-0.15	-0.82	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Outwoods Ward	5697	6.38	0.6	1.12	0.52	2.96	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Shelthorpe Ward	7416	8.53	0.6	1.15	0.55	4.08	Partial accessibility coverage

Parish/Ward	Population	Existing Provision (total ha)	Proposed quantity standard (ha / 1000 popn)	Existing provision per 1000 popn	Applying provision standard (surplus or deficit / 1000 popn)	Impact of applied provision standard (surplus or deficit by total ha)	Accessibility of main settlement (5 min walk/400m)
Loughborough Southfields Ward	6725	1.29	0.6	0.19	-0.41	-2.75	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Storer Ward	6070	2.92	0.6	0.48	-0.12	-0.72	Partial accessibility coverage
Shepshed CP	13505	10.24	0.6	0.76	0.16	2.13	Partial accessibility coverage
Birstall CP	12216	9.91	0.6	0.81	0.21	2.58	Partial accessibility coverage
Thurmaston CP	9668	5.00	0.6	0.52	-0.08	-0.80	Partial accessibility coverage
Anstey CP	6528	9.08	0.6	1.39	0.79	5.16	Partial accessibility coverage
Barrow upon Soar CP	5956	12.39	0.6	2.08	1.48	8.82	Full accessibility coverage
Mountsorrel CP	8223	22.75	0.6	2.77	2.17	17.82	Partial accessibility coverage
Quorndon CP	5177	5.47	0.6	1.06	0.46	2.36	Partial accessibility coverage

Parish/Ward	Population	Existing Provision (total ha)	Proposed quantity standard (ha / 1000 popn)	Existing provision per 1000 popn	Applying provision standard (surplus or deficit / 1000 popn)	Impact of applied provision standard (surplus or deficit by total ha)	Accessibility of main settlement (5 min walk/400m)
Rothley CP	3897	13.63	0.6	3.50	2.90	11.29	Full accessibility coverage
Sileby CP	7835	4.82	0.6	0.62	0.02	0.12	Partial accessibility coverage
System CP	12804	3.31	0.6	0.26	-0.34	-4.37	Partial accessibility coverage

## **SECTION 7: COMBINED PARKS AND GARDENS AND AMENITY GREEN SPACE**

- 7.1** This section looks at the options for combining the quantity standards of the Parks and Gardens and Amenity Green Space typologies.
- 7.2** As Parks and Gardens are also Amenity Green Spaces (but not vice versa), the accessibility for Parks and Gardens using the Amenity Green Space proposed standard has also been tested.
- 7.3** This approach allows flexibility in how the open spaces can be planned for new developments and will help to provide better quality spaces that are appropriate to their location.
- 7.4** The existing standards for both typologies have already been considered in the previous sections. This section therefore only considers the proposed quantity standards, initially as separate standards, followed by a combined approach.

## Proposed standards for combining Amenity Green Space and Parks and Gardens

### Quantity

- 7.5 Combining the Parks and Gardens and Amenity Green Space typologies gives a current provision of 1.35ha per 1000. If the FiT standards for Amenity Green Space and Parks and Gardens are combined, the recommended rate of provision is 1.4 ha per 1000 (0.6 ha per 1000 from Amenity Green Space and 0.8 ha per 1000 from Parks and Gardens), close to the current average provision.
- 7.6 Testing based on the combined FiT standard is shown below in Figure 40 for the Towns and Service Centres. The testing of the proposed standards for the other parishes is provided in Appendix 7. The proposed standards are only met in 1 Loughborough ward and 5 of the service centres. Both Birstall and Thurmaston do not meet the proposed quantity standard, with Thurmaston requiring an additional 6.8 ha of space. However, a number of the wards currently with a deficit will only need a small increase in the provision of either Parks and Gardens or Amenity Green Space to meet the proposed standard, making it a much better fit.
- 7.7 For example, Garendon ward only requires an additional 0.54 ha of Parks and Gardens or Amenity Green Space. The West Loughborough Growth Area located in Garendon ward plans to provide a package of green spaces of approximately 5ha which would bring this ward up to the recommended standard. The same is true for the North East Leicester SUE which would have an impact on the provision in Thurmaston.
- 7.8 The urban nature of a number of Loughborough wards means that demand for space is significantly higher than elsewhere in the district due to the population, therefore it can be extremely difficult to provide the necessary quantity of open space where there are competing land priorities such as for housing. Where this is the case, the focus should be on maximising the quality of existing sites and improving their accessibility.
- 7.9 12 of the 24 smaller settlements have either a Park and Garden or Amenity Green Space within the parish boundary. 9 of these also have a surplus in provision, with the remaining 3 settlements requiring a combined total of 0.9ha. 12 of the smaller settlements do not have either a Park and Garden or Amenity Green Space within the parish boundary.

Figure 40: Proposed quantity testing for combined Parks and Gardens and Amenity Green Space

Parish/Ward	Population	Existing Provision (total ha)	Existing Provision standard (ha / 1000 popn)	Existing provision per 1000 popn	Applying provision standard (surplus or deficit / 1000 popn)	Impact of applied provision standard (surplus or deficit by total ha)
Loughborough Ashby Ward	6487	3.28	1.4	0.51	-0.89	-5.80
Loughborough Dishley	4195	8.44	1.4	2.01	0.61	2.57
Loughborough Garendon Ward	5829	7.62	1.4	1.31	-0.09	-0.54
Loughborough Hastings Ward	6004	2.76	1.4	0.46	-0.94	-5.65
Loughborough Lemington Ward	6504	3.00	1.4	0.46	-0.94	-6.10
Loughborough Nanpantan Ward	5440	2.45	1.4	0.45	-0.95	-5.17
Loughborough Outwoods Ward	5697	6.38	1.4	1.12	-0.28	-1.60
Loughborough Shelthorpe Ward	7416	8.53	1.4	1.15	-0.25	-1.85
Loughborough Southfields Ward	6725	8.52	1.4	1.27	-0.13	-0.89
Loughborough Storer Ward	6070	2.92	1.4	0.48	-0.92	-5.58
Shepshed CP	13505	13.03	1.4	0.97	-0.43	-5.87
Birstall CP	12216	15.49	1.4	1.27	-0.13	-1.61
Thurmaston CP	9668	6.75	1.4	0.70	-0.70	-6.78
Anstey CP	6528	12.08	1.4	1.85	0.45	2.94
Barrow upon Soar CP	5956	14.77	1.4	2.48	1.08	6.43
Mountsorrel CP	8223	22.75	1.4	2.77	1.37	11.24
Quorndon CP	5177	7.77	1.4	1.50	0.10	0.52
Rothley CP	3897	13.63	1.4	3.50	2.10	8.17
Sileby CP	7835	10.60	1.4	1.35	-0.05	-0.37
Syston CP	12804	12.65	1.4	0.99	-0.41	-5.28

## Accessibility

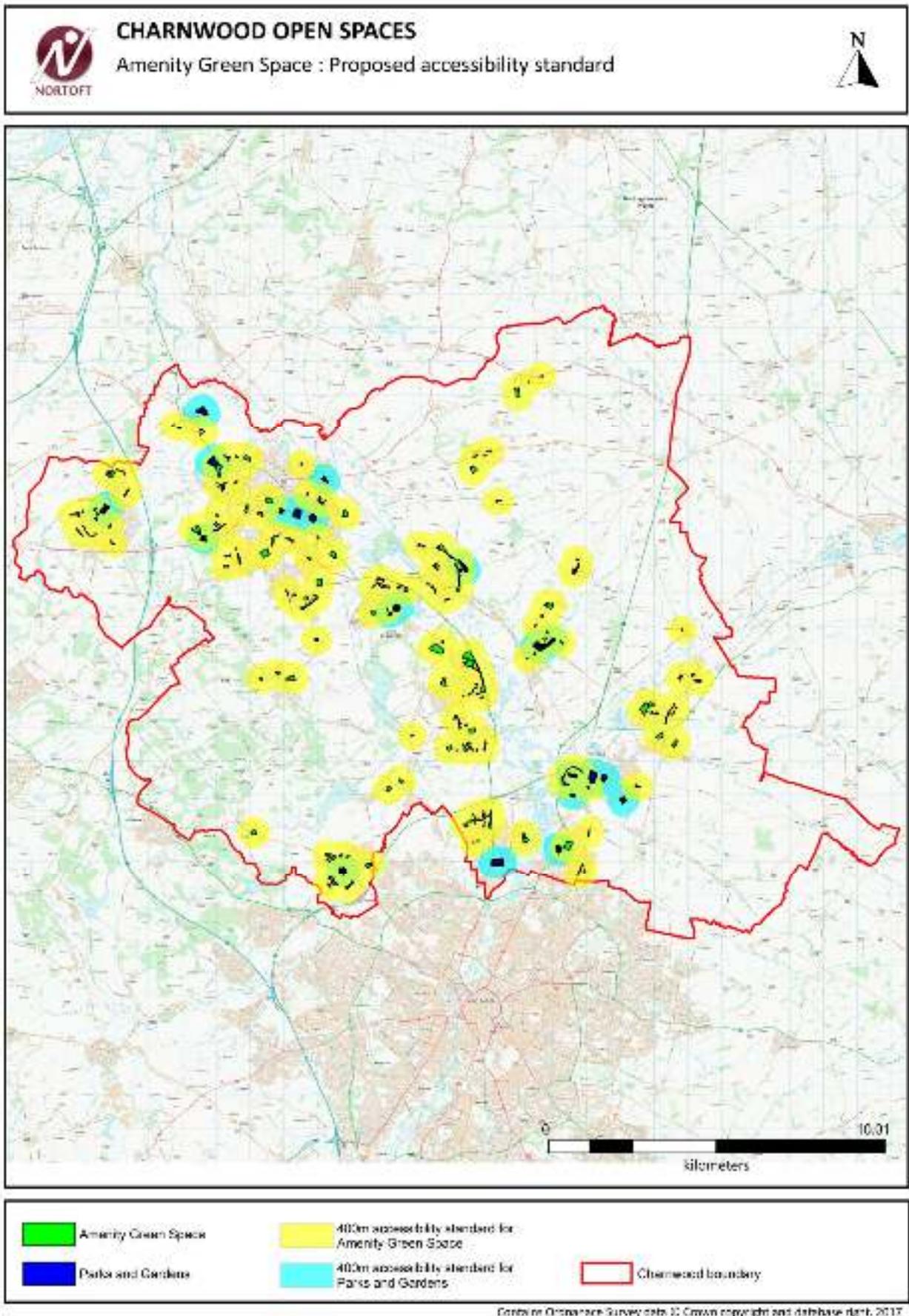
- 7.10** Recognising that Parks and Gardens also act as Amenity Green Space it is appropriate to test a combined accessibility standard. This is suggested as 400m to bring it in line with the FiT recommendations of a 5 minute walk and the findings from the Individuals survey. The result of this testing is give in Figure 41 and Figure 42.
- 7.11** The result of the proposed accessibility shows a general improvement in accessibility for Garendon and Southfields wards, where all residents now have access to either an Amenity Green Space or Park and Garden. In addition, a number of wards, the Leicester Principal Urban Area and service centres show an improved accessibility catchment due to the addition of the Parks and Gardens sites.

*Figure 41: Proposed accessibility Amenity Green Space and Parks and Gardens combined (400m)*

Parish/Ward	Accessibility of main settlement to either Amenity Green Space or Park and Garden (5 min walk/400m)
Loughborough Ashby Ward	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Dishley	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Garendon Ward	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Hastings Ward	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Lemington Ward	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Nanpantan Ward	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Outwoods Ward	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Shelthorpe Ward	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Southfields Ward	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Storer Ward	Partial accessibility coverage
Shepshed CP	Partial accessibility coverage
Birstall CP	Partial accessibility coverage
Thurmaston CP	Partial accessibility coverage
Anstey CP	Partial accessibility coverage
Barrow upon Soar CP	Full accessibility coverage
Mountsorrel CP	Partial accessibility coverage
Quorndon CP	Partial accessibility coverage
Rothley CP	Full accessibility coverage

Parish/Ward	Accessibility of main settlement to either Amenity Green Space or Park and Garden (5 min walk/400m)
Sileby CP	Partial accessibility coverage
Syston CP	Partial accessibility coverage

Figure 42: Amenity Green Space proposed accessibility standard



## Summary

- 7.1.2** Neither the current adopted standard for Parks and Gardens or Amenity Green Space reflect the actual provision of these typologies.
- 7.1.3** The close relationship between Parks and Gardens and Amenity Green Space means that these sites are not often provided in close proximity. However, often people are likely to visit a site due to its closeness, instead of its classification.
- 7.1.4** The average district wide provision for the combined Parks and Gardens and Amenity Green Space of 1.35ha displays a close relationship with the 1.4 ha Fields in Trust combined standard. In addition, this quantity standard is also a better fit when compared to Charnwood's comparator authorities.
- 7.1.5** The combined accessibility mapping shows that more people have access to either a Park and Garden or an Amenity Green Space than one of these typologies alone.
- 7.1.6** From a planning perspective, a combined standard offers flexibility for development management to provide open spaces that are suited to the specific needs and requirements of the site. However, it should be noted that the capital and maintenance costs of Parks and Gardens will usually be higher than Amenity Green Space provision therefore negotiation will need to be undertaken on a case by case basis for major developments.

## Proposed Standards

- 7.17** The following standards are proposed for Parks and Gardens and Amenity Green Space.

In new developments, planning policy should identify the expected proportion of the site to be developed as Parks and Gardens and as Amenity Green Space.

### Quantity

- 1.4ha per 1000

### Quality standard for Parks and Gardens

- Green Flag standard
- Adoption standard: A regularly mowed smooth surfaced grassland space with tree and shrub planting suitable for a variety of informal outdoor recreation activities. Including features such as public gardens, footpaths, play areas, young people's facilities, seating and litter bins. Prepared in accordance with an agreed plan. Clean and litter free, appropriate planting and well kept grass. It is desirable to include

toilets, seating, footpaths, nature features, litter bins and safety features. They should have a clear entrance, boundaries and lighting.

#### Quality standard for Amenity Green Space

- Adoption standard: A regularly mowed smooth surfaced grassland space. Including features such as tree and shrub planting and footpaths. Prepared in accordance with an agreed plan. Clean and litter free, regularly maintained and with well kept grass and appropriate planting. Where possible, sites should also contain litter bins, dog bins and seating and be safe and secure.

#### Accessibility

- 1200m for Parks and Gardens in the Towns and Service Centres
- and
- 400m to an Amenity Green Space or a Park and Garden in the Towns, Service Centres and Other Settlements

## SECTION 8: NATURAL AND SEMI NATURAL GREEN SPACE

8.1 The definition of Natural and Semi Natural Green Space in the Open Spaces Strategy 2013 was:

*These include publicly accessible woodlands, as well as urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (e.g. commons, meadows), wetlands and wastelands. Uses include wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness.*

8.2 Natural England believes everyone should have access to good quality natural green space near to where they live and have developed policy guidance for local authorities in their 2010 report *Nature Nearby: Accessible Natural Greenspace*.

### Current provision and assessment

8.3 There are a large number of sites across Charnwood which meet the criteria to be included in the Natural and Semi-Natural Green Space typology. The total area of Natural and Semi Natural Green Space is 937.92 ha across 37 sites.

8.4 Figure 46 provides an overview of these sites across the district with a catchment of 480m (the existing accessibility standard). The map shows how most of the urban centres lack the provision of Natural and Semi Natural Green Space, with the majority of sites located in the rural areas of the borough, or on the urban fringe.

8.5 The previous study also included Country Parks within the Natural and Semi Natural Green Space typology and this approach has been carried forward.

8.6 There are 11 large (>10ha) sites within the district which make up 89% of the total amount of Natural and Semi Natural provision.

*Figure 43: Large Natural and Semi Natural Green Space sites*

Site ID	Site name	Parish/Ward	Size (ha)
29	Loughborough Meadows	Lemyngton Ward	66.18
195	Mount Grace Road NSN	Garendon Ward	12.23
198	Outwoods	Outwoods Ward	63.80
222	Beacon Hill	Hastings Ward	10.80
224	Rough Hill	Woodhouse CP	95.25
229	Swithland Wood	Newton Linford CP/ Swithland CP	69.6
230	Bradgate Park	Swithland CP	334.16
241	Watermead Country Park	Birstall CP/ Thurmaston CP/ Syston CP	144.4
525	Country Park off Gorse Hill	Anstey CP	15.49

588	Mountsorrel Meadows Nature Reserve	Rothley CP	14.3
638	Little Moor Lane NSN	Hastings Ward	10.18

## Stakeholder consultation

- 8.7 The Individuals survey asked a number of questions on accessibility and provision of Natural and Semi Natural green space within the district.

### Natural and Semi Natural Green Space

- 8.8 This is the second most used of all greenspaces in the borough, with about 20% of people using them on a daily basis, and about 35% on a weekly basis. Almost 50% of survey respondents considered that there was too little natural greenspace.
- 8.9 This typology has strong support, with about 60% of respondents ranking it of highest or second highest importance. A further 18% ranked this type of open space third important. Issues associated with these spaces include a need for improved maintenance (21%), and improved access (19%).
- 8.10 The expected travel mode is by walking, and the preferred distance to natural greenspaces should be 10 minutes.

### Country parks

- 8.11 Country parks are used by more residents than any other type of space, but most people only visit on a monthly basis or less frequently. Only about 3% of respondents used these sites on a daily basis, with about 22% visiting on a weekly basis.
- 8.12 Country parks have very strong support, being ranked as 1st or 2nd most important of all open spaces by almost 80% of the respondents. A large majority of respondents also considered that there was sufficient provision of this type in the borough. Almost 50% of respondents also felt that the country parks were “fine as they are”.
- 8.13 Most people felt that a 20 minute drive time by car was appropriate for this facility type, although ideally the sites would also be accessible by bus and by cycling.

## Testing the existing standards

8.14 The standards tested for Natural and Semi Natural Green Space are:

*Figure 44: Existing adopted standards for Natural and Semi Natural Green Space*

	Quantity per 1000 people	Accessibility
Natural and Semi Natural Green Space	5.7 ha (2ha for new development)	480m

8.15 The testing of the existing standards in relation to quality and accessibility are summarised in Figure 45, Figure 46 and Figure 47 for the Loughborough wards, Towns and Service Centres. Testing of existing standards for all other parishes within Charnwood is provided in Appendix 6.

### Quantity

8.15 The previous strategy highlighted the quantity standard for Natural and Semi Natural Green Space as 5.7ha per 1000. This was based only on the current provision at the time. However, in recommending future provision, it stated a quantity standard of 2.0ha per 1000 was to be applied for new developments.

8.17 In light of this, the previous borough wide average provision of 5.7 ha has been used as the basis for the quantity testing to enable a comparison between the two.

8.18 Overall the provision across the district is now 5.65 ha per 1000 population which is just short of the previous average provision. A number of sites have been removed from this study as they are not publicly accessible, and this is likely to have caused this change.

8.19 Figure 47 provides a summary of the testing of existing standards. Despite a high district wide average provision, only two of the Loughborough wards have a sufficient supply of Natural and Semi Natural Green Space.

8.20 3 of the Loughborough wards do not have any Natural and Semi Natural Green Space within their boundaries. The significant quantity requirement, combined with relatively concentrated urban populations, would create a considerable need for additional Natural and Semi Natural Green Space; a total of 210 ha against the existing quantity standard. This is not realistic to provide within an urban setting.

8.21 Shepshed, Birstall and all of the service centres have a deficit in the provision of Natural and Semi Natural Green Space. However, Barrow upon Soar and Sileby have no provision.

8.22 Thurmaston has a surplus in provision of 7.9 ha.

**8.73** 6 of the 24 smaller settlements have a Natural and Semi Natural Green Space within their parish. Both Newton Linford (where Bradgate Park is located) and Woodhouse have a substantial provision of Natural and Semi Natural Green Space; a combined area of 512 ha. All other settlements with the exception of Swithland, do not meet the existing quantity standard.

**8.74** Bradgate Park is the single largest open space site in Charnwood, with a total area of 334.16 ha, roughly one third of all Natural and Semi Natural Green Space within the borough. As the existing standards are based on the average district wide provision, the inclusion of Bradgate Park (as well as a number of other large sites) has skewed the figure used for existing provision.

**8.75** It is therefore clear that the average borough wide provision of Natural and Semi Natural Green Space is not a suitable quantity standard.

## Accessibility

**8.76** The existing accessibility standard of 480m is only achieved in 1 Loughborough ward; Dishley. A significant proportion of the remaining wards, towns, the Leicester Principal Urban Area and service centres have at least a partial coverage of Natural and Semi Natural Green Space.

**8.77** The Loughborough wards; Southfields and Storer, as well as Barrow Upon Soar, Rothley and Sileby parishes do not have any coverage from the existing accessibility.

**8.78** Only 1 of the smaller settlements is afforded a complete coverage from the existing accessibility, however a further 4 settlements show a partial coverage. The 19 remaining smaller settlements do not have any coverage from the existing accessibility standard.

## Quality

**8.79** Green Flag is the current formal quality standard for Natural and Semi Natural Green Space, and has proved a useful assessment tool. For Natural and Semi Natural Green Space, the Green Flag criteria assessed are:

- A welcoming place
- Health, safety and security
- Well maintained and clean
- Conservation and heritage
- Community involvement
- Marketing
- Ecosystem Services

**8.80** The average quality scores are provided in Figure 45 and show a considerable variation between the Green Flag criteria.

8.31 Most notably, community involvement only scores an average of 5%. However, when the nature of a Natural and Semi Natural Green Space is considered, the criteria for community involvement (Active friends group) will not be relevant for the majority of sites, but is relevant for the larger sites and country parks.

8.32 As Natural and Semi Natural Green Spaces are occasionally subject to reduced maintenance (to ensure the site is 'natural') and may not be actively marketed or easily accessed. The variety of sites included within this typology means that a category relevant to one site may not be important at another.

*Figure 45: Natural and Semi Natural Green Space average quality*

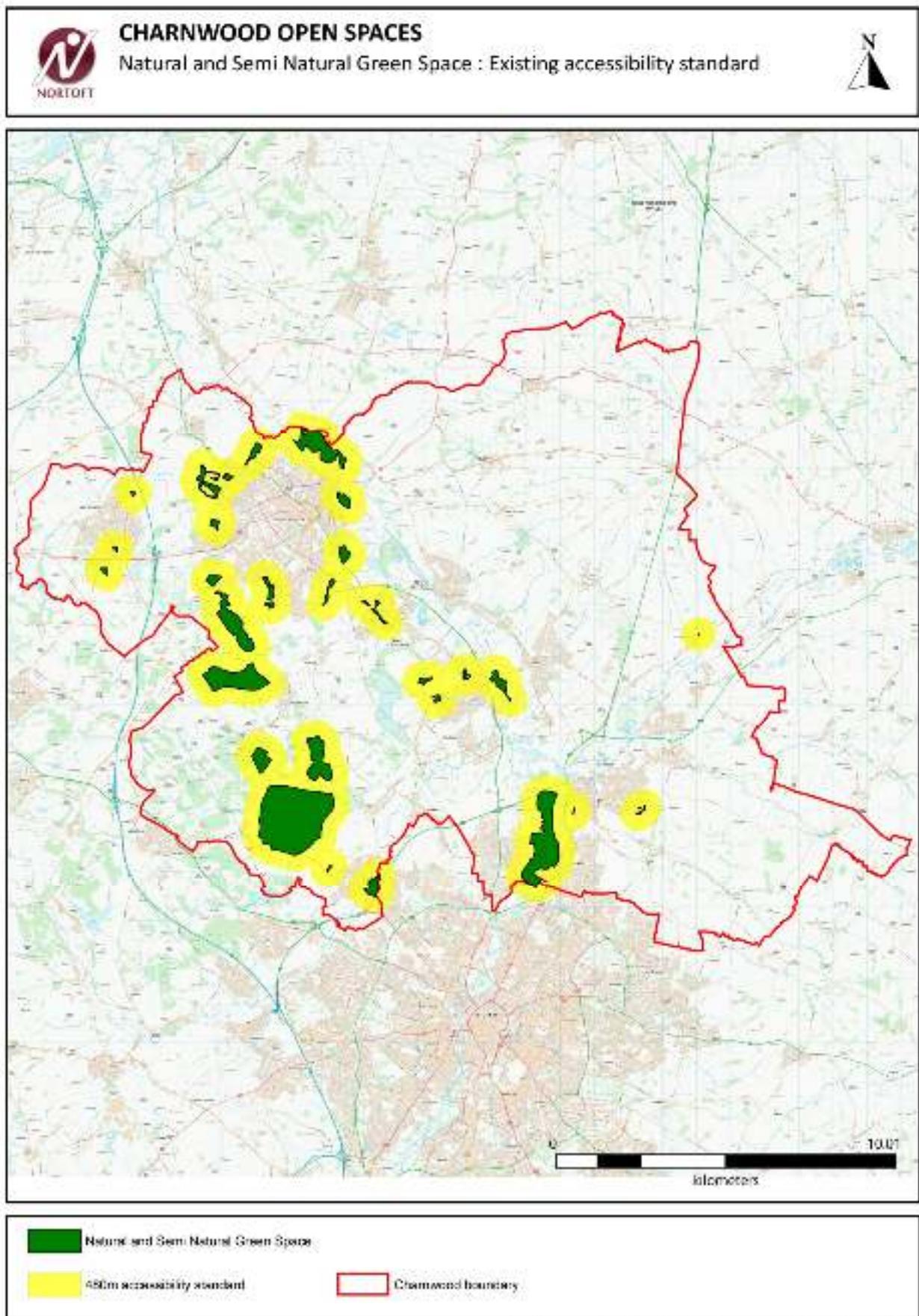
Category	Average quality score
<i>A welcoming place</i>	38%
<i>Health, safety and security</i>	38%
<i>Well maintained and clean</i>	54%
<i>Conservation and heritage</i>	77%
<i>Community involvement</i>	5%
<i>Marketing</i>	28%
<i>Ecosystem Services</i>	68%

8.33 The Green Flag criteria used to assess Natural and Semi Natural Green Space are also used for the assessment of all multi-functional green spaces and are therefore broad in their application, but narrow in their focus.

8.34 Natural and Semi Natural Green Spaces display a considerable variety, from the managed country parks and reservoirs to the 'natural' grasslands and meadows. Therefore, it is inherently difficult to produce a site assessment that suitably meets the site specific details of each site whilst allowing for a comparison between the different typologies and specific sites.

8.35 The quality scores awarded to Natural and Semi Natural Green Spaces, especially the scores flagged as being of poor quality, should therefore be used on a site by site basis, dependent on each site's specific needs and requirements.

Figure 46: Natural and Semi Natural Green Space existing accessibility



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Figure 47: Natural and Semi Natural Green Space existing accessibility standards

Parish/Ward	Population	Existing Provision (total ha)	Existing Provision standard (ha / 1000 popn)	Existing provision per 1000 popn	Applying provision standard (surplus or deficit / 1000 popn)	Impact of applied provision standard (surplus or deficit by total ha)	Accessibility of main settlement (10 min walk/480m)
Loughborough Ashby Ward	6487	0.00	5.70	0.00	-5.70	-36.98	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Dishley	4195	12.33	5.70	2.94	-2.76	-11.58	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Garendon Ward	5829	17.01	5.70	2.92	-2.78	-16.21	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Hastings Ward	6004	20.98	5.70	3.49	-2.21	-13.24	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Lemyngton Ward	6504	75.49	5.70	11.61	5.91	38.42	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Nanpantan Ward	5440	8.46	5.70	1.55	-4.15	-22.55	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Outwoods Ward	5697	76.39	5.70	13.41	7.71	43.91	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Shelthorpe Ward	7416	5.64	5.70	0.76	-4.94	-36.63	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Southfields Ward	6725	0.00	5.70	0.00	-5.70	-38.33	No accessibility coverage
Loughborough Storer Ward	6070	0.00	5.70	0.00	-5.70	-34.60	No accessibility coverage
Shepshed CP	13505	5.52	5.70	0.41	-5.29	-71.46	Partial accessibility coverage

Parish/Ward	Population	Existing Provision (total ha)	Existing Provision standard (ha / 1000 popn)	Existing provision per 1000 popn	Applying provision standard (surplus or deficit / 1000 popn)	Impact of applied provision standard (surplus or deficit by total ha)	Accessibility of main settlement (10 min walk/480m)
Birstall CP	12216	52.91	5.7	4.33	-1.37	-16.72	Partial accessibility coverage
Thurmaston CP	9668	62.97	5.7	6.51	0.81	7.86	Partial accessibility coverage
Anstey CP	6528	16.46	5.70	2.52	-3.18	-20.75	Partial accessibility coverage
Barrow upon Soar CP	5956	0.00	5.70	0.00	-5.70	-33.95	No accessibility coverage
Mountsorrel CP	8223	10.32	5.70	1.25	-4.45	-36.55	Partial accessibility coverage
Quorndon CP	5177	5.66	5.70	1.09	-4.61	-23.85	Partial accessibility coverage
Rothley CP	3897	14.30	5.70	3.67	-2.03	-7.91	No accessibility coverage
Sileby CP	7835	0.00	5.70	0.00	-5.70	-44.66	No accessibility coverage
Syston CP	12804	30.30	5.70	2.37	-3.33	-42.68	Partial accessibility coverage

## Testing alternative standards

### Assessment criteria

- 8.36** As agreed by Charnwood Borough Council, the criteria used to assess the quality of Natural and Semi Natural Green Space is based on the Green Flag approach. All sites have been assessed against the following Green Flag categories:
- A Welcoming Place
  - Healthy, Safe and Secure
  - Well Maintained and Clean
  - Conservation and Heritage
  - Community Involvement
  - Marketing
  - Ecosystem Services
- 8.37** The assessment considers current practice nationally, and the adopted standards across Charnwood's benchmark comparator authorities.

### Inclusion of Green Corridors

- 8.38** The previous strategy did not provide any quantitative standards for Green Corridors. Green Corridors are linear routes with the primary purpose of providing opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding. Due to their linear form, there is often no sensible way to provide a quantity standard.
- 8.39** However, all of these sites within Charnwood are in a natural or semi-natural state, and can be considered as Natural and Semi Natural Green Space. The area of Green Corridors has therefore been added to the parish totals and they have been included in the accessibility maps for the testing of the proposed standards.

### Fields in Trust

- 8.40** The Fields in Trust survey of local authorities report of 2015 identified that only a relatively small number of authorities had separate standards for Natural and Semi Natural Green Space (including green corridors). Where they did, the median level of the standard of provision was 1.78 ha per 1000. The FiT has now recommended within their October 2015 report a minimum quantity guideline for Natural and Semi Natural Green Space of 1.8 ha per 1000, with an accessibility standard of 720m (approximately a 9 minute walk).

### Comparators

- 8.41** A comparison of the standards of provision in Charnwood with the CIPFA benchmark authorities is provided in Figure 48. There is a clear range in both the quantity and accessibility standards used by Charnwood's comparator authorities; from 0.23ha to 5ha per 1000 and 300m to 720m for accessibility.

Figure 48: Comparators for Natural and Semi Natural Green Space

	Natural and Semi Natural Green space	
	Quantity (Ha per 1000)	Accessibility (m)
Charnwood	5.7ha (2ha for all new development)	480m
<b>CIPFA comparators</b>		
Broxtowe	2ha	300m
Colchester	5ha (excluding rural analysis)	720m
Huntingdonshire	0.23 ha	720m
Stafford	1.5 Urban 1.1 Rural (combined standard)	600m

### Natural England

8.42 Natural England is the relevant statutory body in relation to natural green space, and in the report *Nature Nearby: Accessible Natural Greenspace* (2010) it recommends the following standards:

- at least one accessible 2 hectare site within 300 m of home; and
- at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home; and
- one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home; and
- one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home.
- minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserve per 1000 population.

8.43 It has been agreed to test only the first three standards above as there are no sites within Charnwood that are over 500 hectares in size and having a standard for local nature reserves is not considered appropriate for this study.

### Testing ANGSt standards

8.44 The Accessible Natural Green Space standards (ANGSt) promoted by Natural England only have accessibility criteria. They are therefore tested through mapping, and the results are provided in Figure 49, Figure 50 and Figure 51.

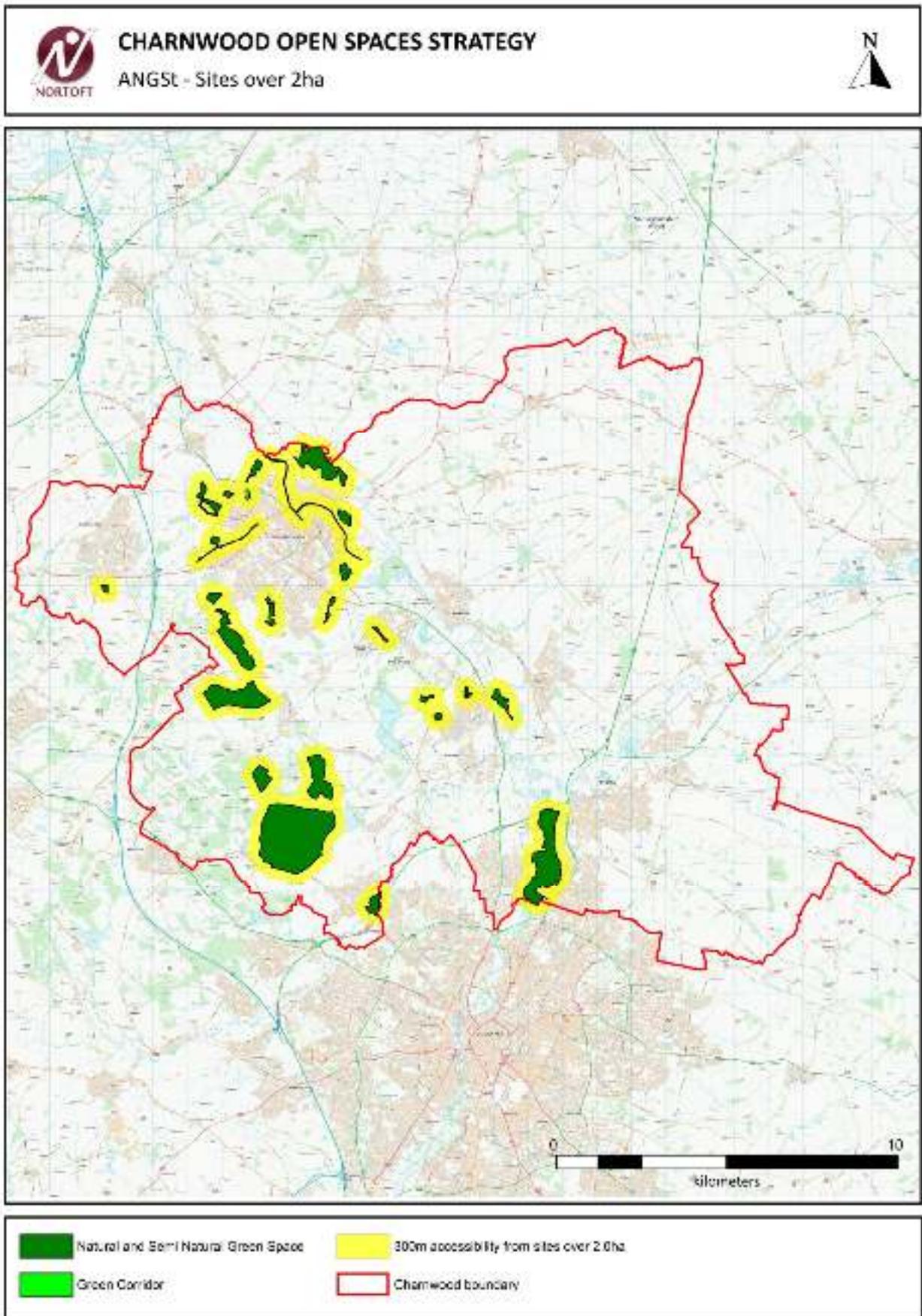
8.45 There are no sites either within or close to the boundaries of the authority which meet the 500 ha site size, so there is no map for this ANGSt level.

8.46 The key findings are:

- There are two sites which meet the 100+ ha size; Bradgate Park and Watermead Country Park.
- There are a number of sites which are 20+ ha in size, and the 2km catchment covers a large area of Loughborough as well as Birstall, Thurmaston and much of Syston. However there are significant gaps across the rural areas, especially in the east of the borough.
- The 300m catchment to sites of 2 ha and above gives some coverage to the north of Loughborough, but there is only limited coverage elsewhere.

**3.47** Whilst the ANGSt standards are a useful tool in gauging the spread of Natural and Semi Natural spaces available to the public in Charnwood, the larger levels of provision are unrealistic.

Figure 49: ANGSt standard – 2 ha within 300m



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Figure 50: ANGSt standard – 20 ha within 2km

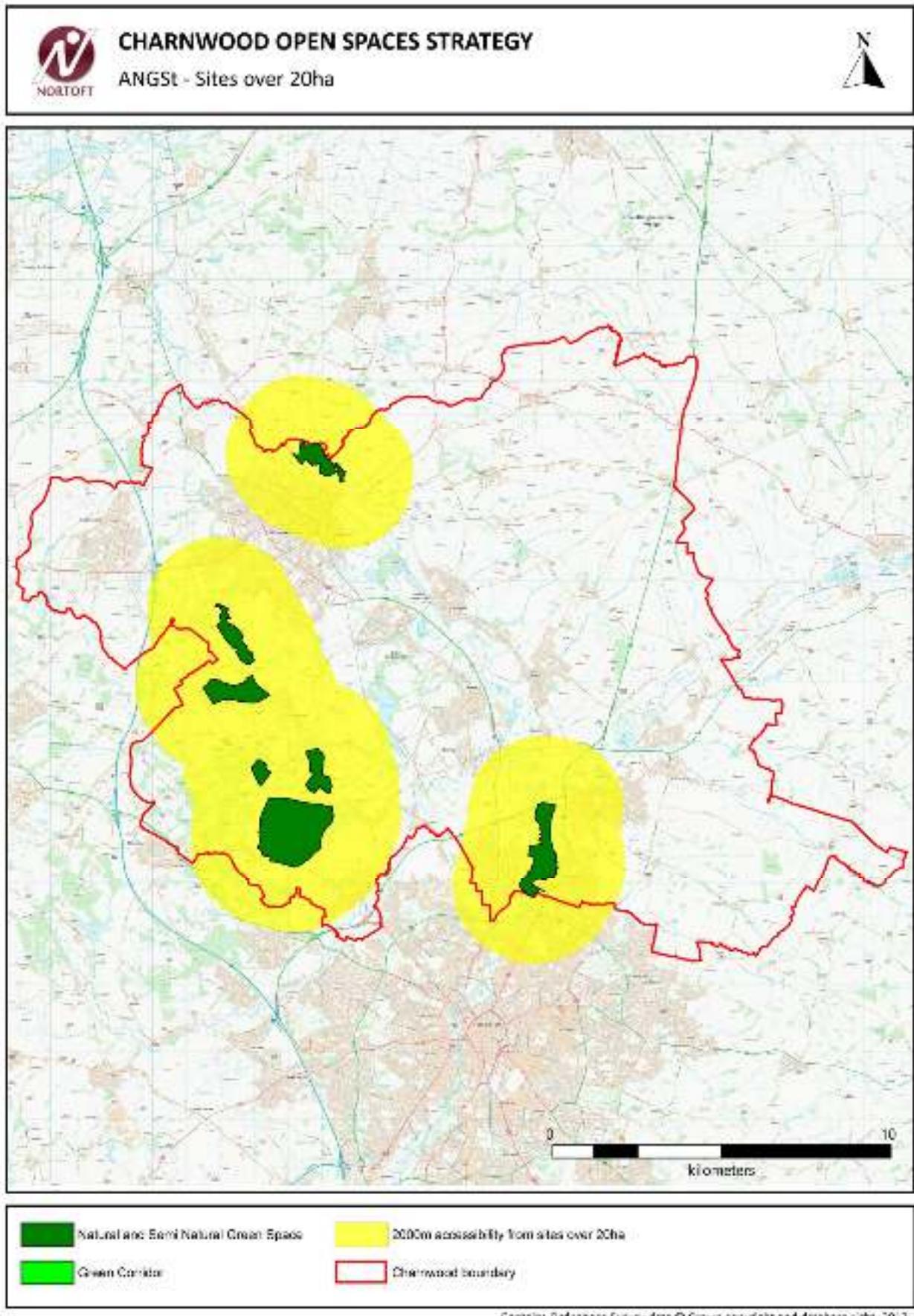
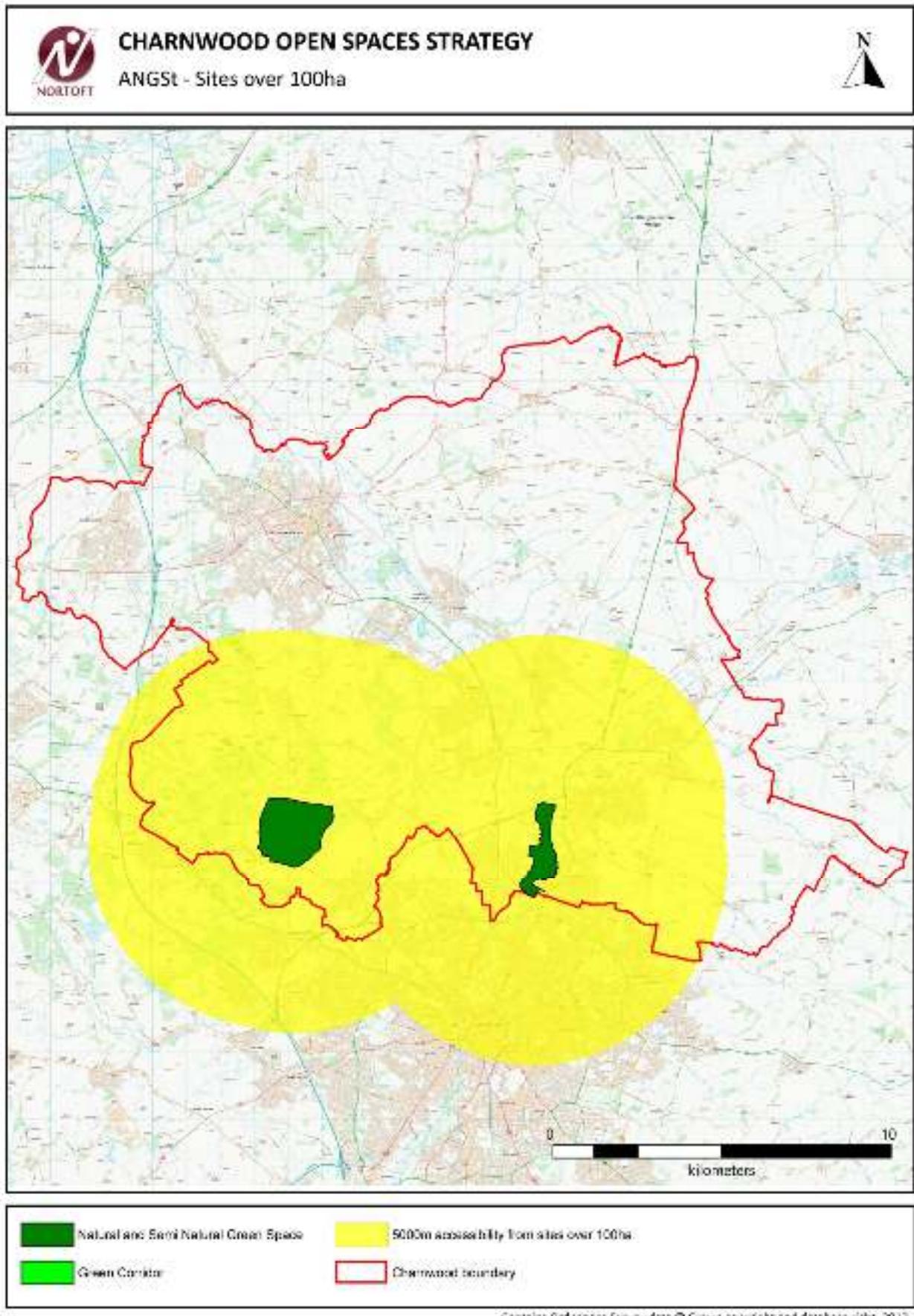


Figure 51: ANGst standard – 100 ha within 5km



## Quantity

- 3.48** The current adopted standard for Natural and Semi Natural Green Space is only applied to new developments. Therefore, the average provision in Charnwood defined in the previous study (5.7 ha per 1000) has been tested but only a small number of the Loughborough wards, Towns and Service Centres meet the current standard.
- 3.49** The quantity of large Natural and Semi Natural Green Spaces within Charnwood has skewed the average provision, on which the existing standard is based. If sites >10ha are removed from the assessment, the average provision is 0.6ha per 1000.
- 3.50** For new developments, a quantity standard of 2ha per 1000 is applied by Charnwood Borough Council. Natural England recommends at least 2ha of accessible natural greenspace per 1000 people is provided. The Woodland Trust recommends that everyone should live within 500m of an accessible woodland of at least 2ha in size.
- 3.51** Given the outcome of the testing, it is proposed that the existing quantity standard of 2.0 ha per 1000 is retained.

## Quality

- 3.52** Selected criteria from the Green Flag approach is the most appropriate way of assessing the quality of natural and semi natural green spaces. These are:
- A Welcoming Place
  - Healthy, Safe and Secure
  - Well Maintained and Clean
- 3.53** The 2013 Open Spaces Strategy also contains quality standards for adoption of Natural and Semi Natural Green Spaces and these have been taken forward.

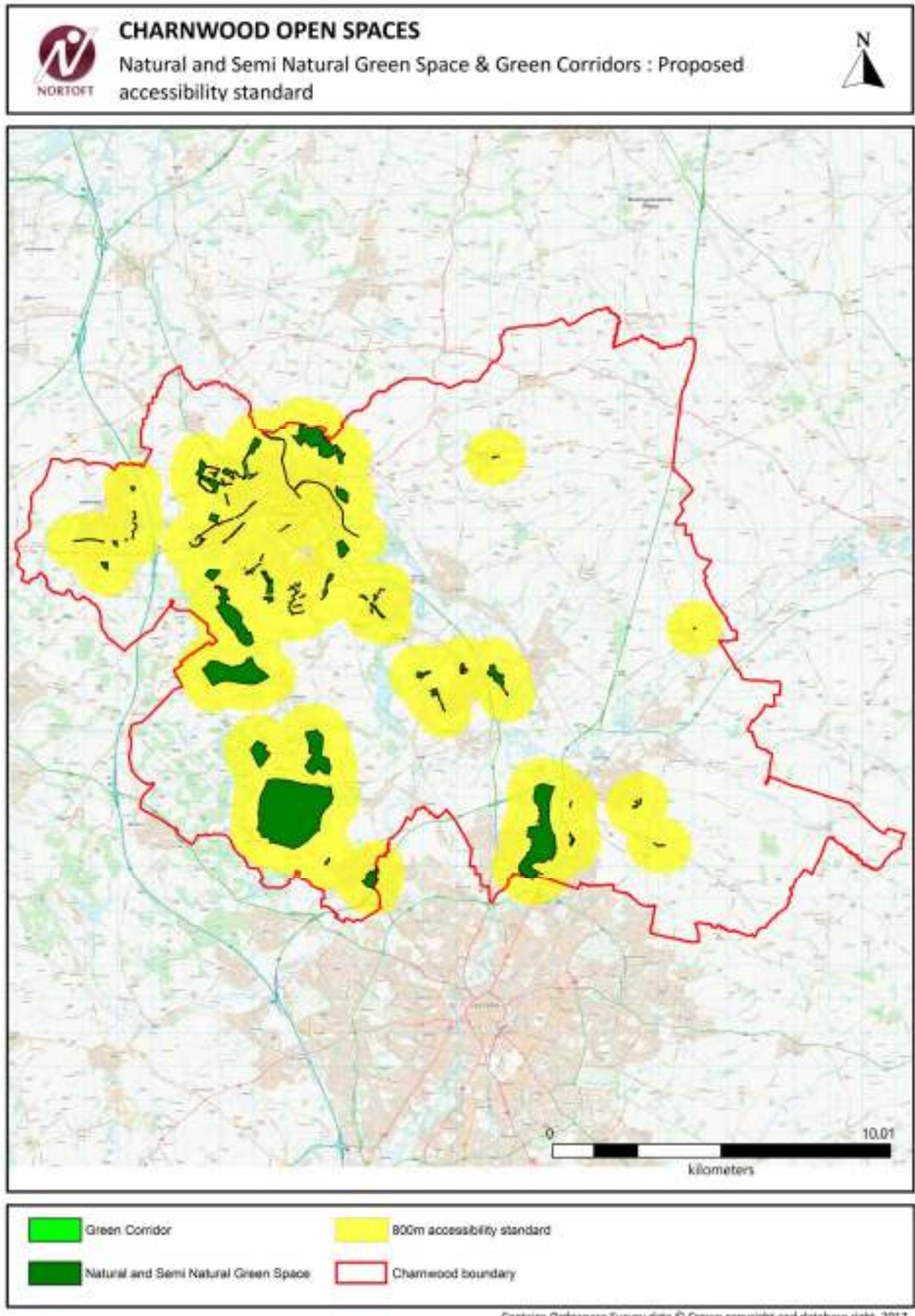
## Accessibility

- 3.54** The public survey found a majority of respondents would expect to be able to walk up to 10 minutes to access their nearest Natural and Semi Natural Green Space and Fields in Trust also identify an 800m catchment as suitable for a 10 minute walk, so this has been taken forward.
- 3.55** The location of Natural and Semi Natural Green Spaces means that all wards, Towns and Service Centres have at least a partial coverage of the proposed accessibility standards, with the exception of Barrow upon Soar.
- 3.56** The proposed accessibility standard testing outcomes for Natural and Semi Natural Green Space are shown in Figure 52 and Figure 53.

Figure 52: Proposed accessibility standard for Natural and Semi Natural Green Space

Parish/Ward	Population	Existing Provision (total ha)	Accessibility of main settlement (10 min walk/800m)
Loughborough Ashby Ward	6487	6.32	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Dishley	4195	20.90	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Garendon Ward	5829	19.00	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Hastings Ward	6004	20.98	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Lemington Ward	6504	86.67	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Nanpantan Ward	5440	8.46	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Outwoods Ward	5697	78.42	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Shelthorpe Ward	7416	9.49	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Southfields Ward	6725	0.43	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Storer Ward	6070	0.00	Full accessibility coverage
Shepshed CP	13505	8.93	Partial accessibility coverage
Birstall CP	12216	52.91	Partial accessibility coverage
Thurmaston CP	9668	64.49	Partial accessibility coverage
Anstey CP	6528	16.46	Partial accessibility coverage
Barrow upon Soar CP	5956	0.00	No accessibility coverage
Mountsorrel CP	8223	11.11	Partial accessibility coverage
Quorndon CP	5177	6.36	Partial accessibility coverage
Rothley CP	3897	14.30	Partial accessibility coverage
Sileby CP	7835	0.00	Partial accessibility coverage
System CP	12804	30.30	Partial accessibility coverage

Figure 53: Natural and Semi Natural Green Space proposed accessibility standards



## Proposed Standards

2.57 The following standards are proposed for Natural and Semi Natural Green Space:

### Quantity

- 2ha per 1000 to be applied to new developments only

### Quality

- Adoption standard: An accessible space with wildlife habitats to improve biodiversity. These may be predominantly woodland, water, meadow or a combination. Prepared in accordance with an agreed management plan. Clean and litter free, nature features, safe footpaths and appropriate planting. It is also desirable for sites to include water features, parking, dog walking facilities, seating, information and toilets.

### Accessibility

- 800m

## SECTION 9: CHILDREN'S PLAY AND YOUTH PROVISION

9.1 The typologies of different open spaces were set out in the, now withdrawn, PPG17 and its Annex. The Provision for Children and Young People related to open space areas with play equipment found in housing areas providing a focus for children and young people to engage in physical and social activities.

9.2 The definition for this typology in the Open Spaces Strategy 2013 is:

*Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children below age 12, specifically designed as equipped play facilities.*

*and*

*Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving young people aged 12 and above, specifically designed for use by young people (e.g. youth shelters, skateboard parks etc).*

9.3 The definition of play sites is as defined by Fields In Trust (FIT) (previously the National Playing Fields Association). Further details about these Play Provision definitions are provided in Appendix 8.

9.4 Fields In Trust has identified three categories of play area. These are set out in Appendix 8 along with their defining characteristics, but very simplistically:

- Local Area for Play (LAPs): a minimum area of around 100 sq m designed for children up to 6 years, and located within 1 minute walking time from home.
- Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP): must be a minimum of 400 sq m in size, to cater for younger children beginning to play independently, and to have a catchment of around 400 m.
- Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP): is much larger and caters predominantly for more independent older children with a minimum area of around 1,000 sq m in size and to have a catchment of around 1,000m. NEAPs may also have equipment suitable for younger ages, and therefore act as a LEAP as well as a NEAP. NEAPs should have a hard surface area such as a multi-use games area or a skate park, or other youth facility catering for older children.

9.5 This assessment has considered the provision of equipped play space. Complementary to equipped play provision is unequipped play space that is landscaped or provides an environment that can facilitate and support play activities. Unequipped play space is considered as part of Amenity Green Space, addressed earlier in this report. This is consistent with the provision of open space set out in guidance provided by the Fields In Trust and Planning Practice Guidance published by the Government, which does not distinguish between different types of open space and the functions they play in the community.

- 9.6 Only those sites which have unrestricted community access are included in this assessment and where a play facility lies within or immediately adjacent to another typology, the area (ha) of play space has been incorporated into the overall total of that site.
- 9.7 The characteristics of the play areas themselves and those of their surroundings provide the context of how these spaces are generally used and the role they play in the community. This often determines the quality and value they have to the local area.
- 9.8 Playgrounds located in the right locations will be well used. A good location is where children at play can 'see and be seen' by a trusted adult (usually a parent or a friend's parent) and 'where it is at', where there is a high probability that other people will pass through. A playground in a poor location, even with good equipment, is likely to have low usage and be vulnerable to antisocial behaviour.
- 9.9 Children are more likely to use playgrounds further from their homes when they are with adults, but tend to use play areas nearer when they are out on their own or with friends. Well used playgrounds are an important meeting place for parents as well as children. Although a small number of playgrounds will be used as specific destinations, which usually relies on users driving to reach the facility, a drive time catchment for most Local Equipped Areas for Play and Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play is not appropriate. The focus on the testing of the standards for play is therefore on walking accessibility.
- 9.10 The previous study classified all children's play sites in terms of them being designated play areas. This study has used the definitions of play sites and sites for young people defined by Fields In Trust in their October 2015 report, *Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard* (see Appendix 8).
- 9.11 Emerging best practice is leading to slightly different approaches towards the provision of children's play, which is not entirely in line with the earlier Fields In Trust criteria for LEAPs and NEAPs. In particular, there is a growing trend towards not fencing off children's playgrounds for a number of reasons, including ease of maintenance and to help reduce bullying. Some areas have also seen the growth of natural play facilities, but this is most usually as part of a LEAP or NEAP as these areas still need designing and maintaining. The cost of a natural play area can at least equal that of a more traditional LEAP or NEAP with its standardised equipment.
- 9.12 There are a number of organisations and agencies which provide good practice advice, and these include Play England, the Play Safety Forum, County Playing Fields Associations, RPII, RoSPA and API.

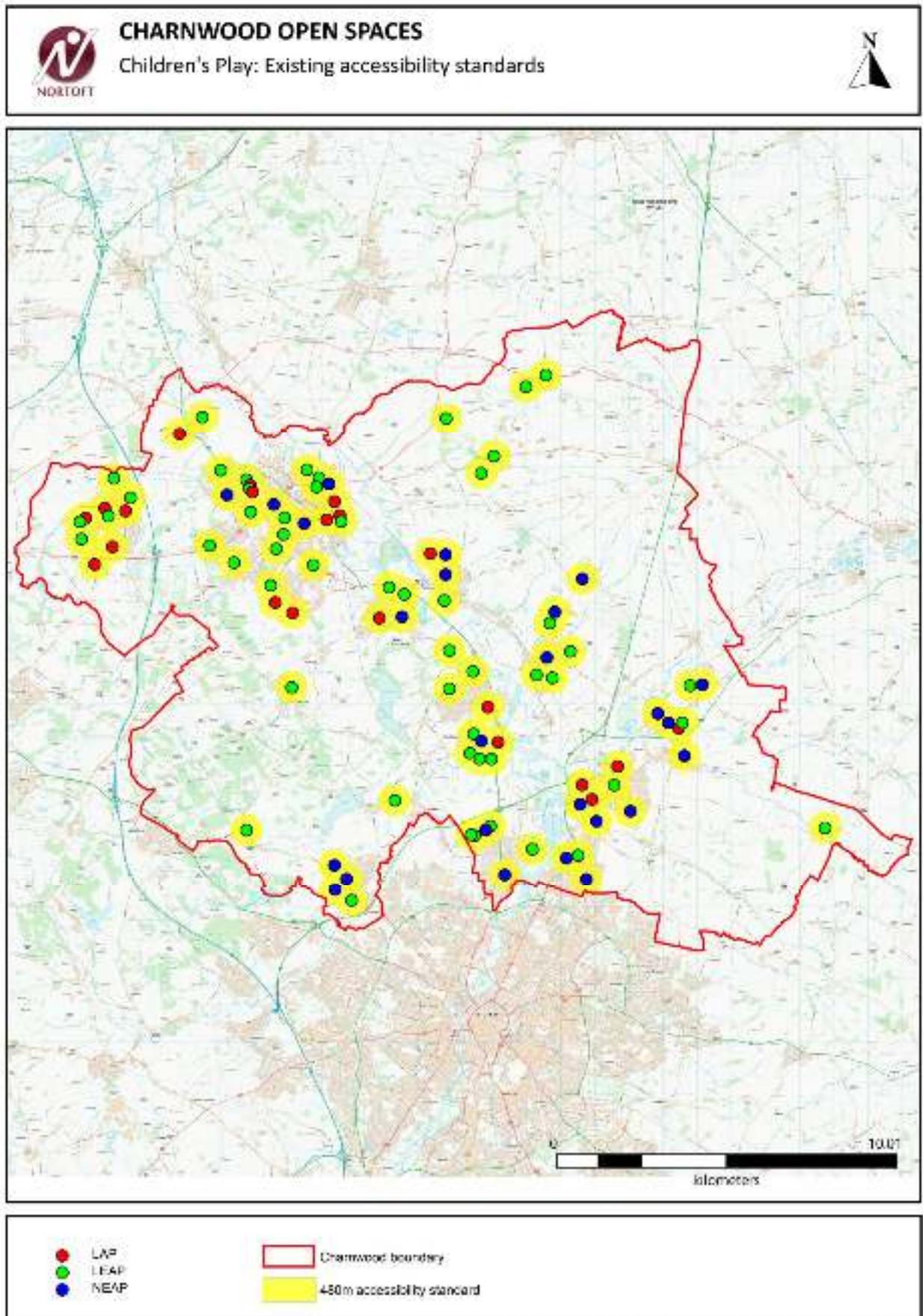
## Current provision and assessment

- 9.13** The map of the existing Children’s Play sites across Charnwood is given in Figure 54 and provision for Teenagers is mapped in Figure 55 with the current accessibility standard of 480m.
- 9.14** The headline finding is that there is reasonable coverage of Children’s Play facilities in the Loughborough wards, Towns and Service Centres, as all have at least a partial coverage.
- 9.15** In relation to teenage provision, again the town has a reasonable coverage, though there are some significant gaps. Nanpantan and Outwoods wards as well as Rothley are not covered by the existing accessibility.

## Stakeholder consultation

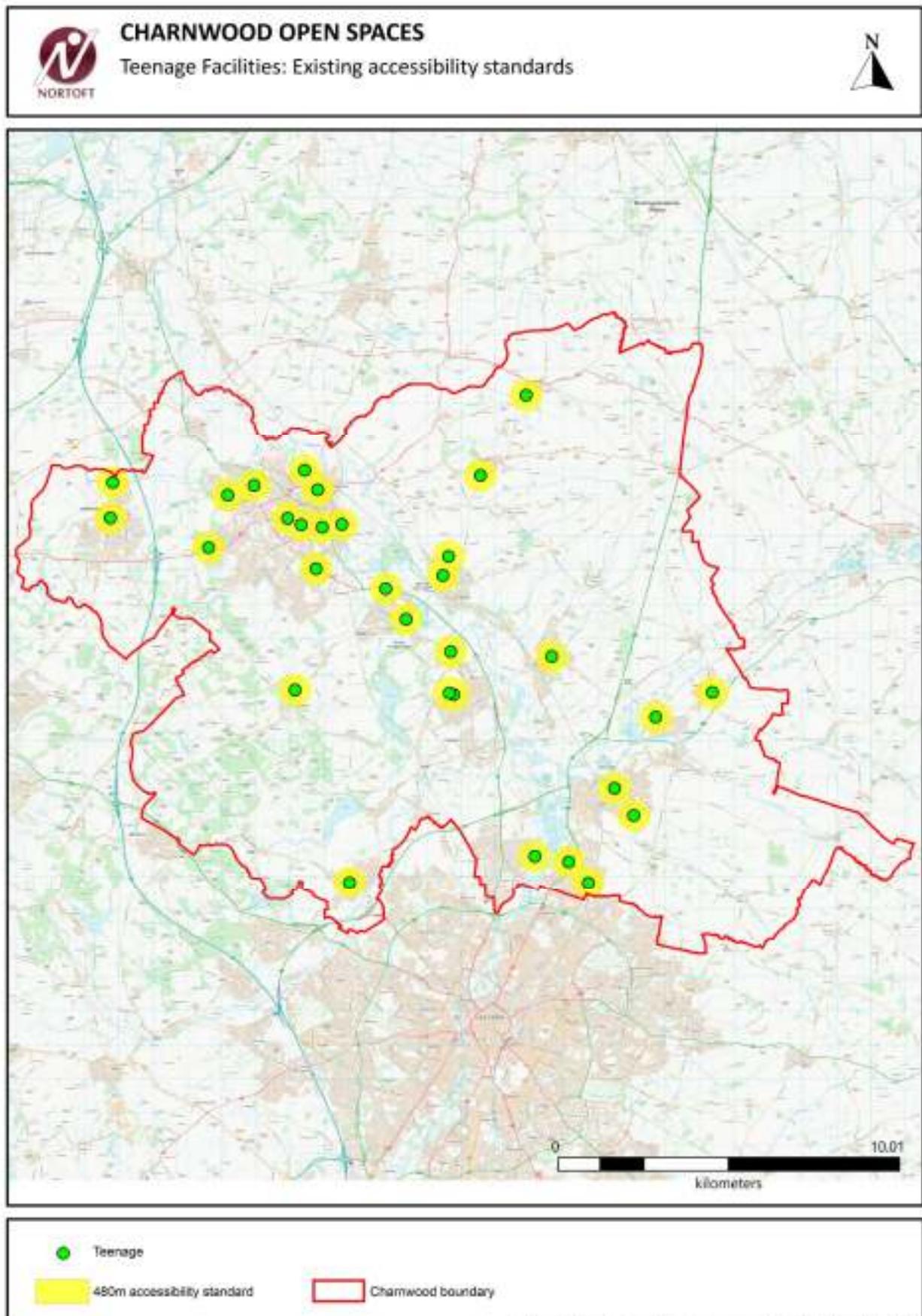
- 9.16** The Individuals survey asked a number of questions on accessibility and provision of Children’s Play Areas within the borough.
- 9.17** About 30% of respondents use children’s playgrounds, with most use being on an occasional basis, though over 30% of regular users do so on at least a weekly basis.
- 9.18** Most respondents felt that there was about the right amount of provision, although about 28% consider that more provision is required. The views of the respondents on the relative importance of these sites are more evenly spread than for the other typologies, from very important to through to not important.
- 9.19** The respondents considered that children’s play provision can be improved by better maintenance, improved safety, increasing the number of activities. However about 30% of respondents are happy with the provision (though they may not use it).
- 9.20** There is a clear expectation that these sites should be accessible on foot, with some respondents suggesting this should be within 5 minutes, and other within 10 minutes.
- 9.21** About 6% of respondents use skate parks and about 30% of respondents considered that there is about the right amount of provision. Given the low number of respondents within the usual age groups using skate parks, these findings should be considered with some caution.

Figure 54: Children's Play sites in Charnwood



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Figure 55: Provision for teenagers in Charnwood



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## Testing the existing standards

9.72 The existing adopted standards for Children and Young people’s facilities:

*Figure 56: Existing adopted standards for Children and Young People*

	<b>Accessibility</b>
	<b>Walking threshold</b>
Provision for Children & Young People	480m

9.73 All of the children’s play and teenage sites were audited against agreed templates. These identified which sites were appropriate for which age groups and whether the sites broadly met the LAP, LEAP or NEAP definitions of Fields In Trust.

9.74 The detailed results of the testing of the existing standards for Children’s Play and Teenage Facilities are provided in

9.75 Figure 57 and Figure 58 for the Loughborough wards, Towns and Service Centres within Charnwood. Testing of the existing standards for all parishes and wards is provided in Appendix 6.

### Accessibility

9.76

9.77 Figure 57 and Figure 58 provide a detailed overview of the quantity and accessibility of Children’s Play and Teenage Facilities in Charnwood.

9.78 Loughborough Dishley and Rothley are the only areas that have a complete coverage of Children’s Play facilities at the existing standard (480m).

9.79 The accessibility for teenage facilities is not fully achieved in any of the Towns, the Leicester Principal Urban Area or Service Centres in Charnwood. 2 Loughborough wards; Nanpantan and Outwoods do not have any coverage from the existing 480m accessibility. Rothley is the only Service Centre not to have any of the main settlement covered by the existing accessibility.

9.80 7 of the 24 smaller settlements have a full accessibility coverage when testing the existing standards. A further 6 settlements are partially covered, with the remaining 11 settlements without any coverage from the existing accessibility standard.

9.81 The current accessibility standards do reflect the nature of the different types of provision within the standard, by categorising them between provision for children and provision for young people, but not between LAPs, LEAPS, NEAPs and teenage facilities. The Fields in Trust median accessibility standard was 400m for LEAPs and 1000m for NEAPs. For equipped teenage facilities the median accessibility standard

was 660m. The Charnwood accessibility standards are the same for both children’s and young people’s provision (480m).

9.37 The CIPFA comparators accessibility standards ranged from 300m to 900m. Stafford is the only authority that differentiates the accessibility standards for different types of play site. However, the accessibility standards for Charnwood are within the normal range when compared to the CIPFA comparators.

*Figure 57: Testing the existing standards for Children’s Play*

Parish/Ward	Existing Provision (Number of sites)	Accessibility of main settlement (10 min walk/480m)
Loughborough Ashby Ward	2	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Dishley	2	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Garendon Ward	1	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Hastings Ward	4	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Lemyngton Ward	4	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Nanpantan Ward	1	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Outwoods Ward	3	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Shelthorpe Ward	2	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Southfields Ward	3	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Storer Ward	4	Partial accessibility coverage
Shepshed CP	10	Partial accessibility coverage
Birstall CP	6	Partial accessibility coverage
Thurmaston CP	3	Partial accessibility coverage
Anstey CP	4	Partial accessibility coverage
Barrow upon Soar CP	4	Partial accessibility coverage
Mountsorrel CP	3	Partial accessibility coverage
Quorndon CP	4	Partial accessibility coverage
Rothley CP	7	Full accessibility coverage
Sileby CP	6	Partial accessibility coverage
Syston CP	7	Partial accessibility coverage

Figure 58: Testing the existing standards for Teenage Facilities

Parish/Ward	Existing Provision (Number of sites)	Accessibility of main settlement (10 min walk/480m)
Loughborough Ashby Ward	1	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Dishley	0	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Garendon Ward	1	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Hastings Ward	1	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Lemyngton Ward	2	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Nanpantan Ward	0	No accessibility coverage
Loughborough Outwoods Ward	0	No accessibility coverage
Loughborough Shelthorpe Ward	1	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Southfields Ward	3	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Storer Ward	1	Partial accessibility coverage
Shepshed CP	2	Partial accessibility coverage
Birstall CP	1	Partial accessibility coverage
Thurmaston CP	2	Partial accessibility coverage
Anstey CP	1	Partial accessibility coverage
Barrow upon Soar CP	2	Partial accessibility coverage
Mountsorrel CP	3	Partial accessibility coverage
Quorndon CP	2	Partial accessibility coverage
Rothley CP	0	No accessibility coverage
Sileby CP	1	Partial accessibility coverage
Syston CP	2	Partial accessibility coverage

## Quality

9.33 The sites were assessed for quality against the following headings. No formal safety assessment was conducted as this was outside the scope of the brief.

- General characteristics
- Pedestrian Accessibility
- Safety and Security
- Condition of Play Equipment
- Other Facilities
- Management and Maintenance

9.34 The children’s play and teenage sites were generally considered good quality. However, Figure 59 details the sites that had quality issues (at least one category scoring as ‘poor’):

*Figure 59: Children’s play and teenage provision with quality issues*

Site ID	Site	Quality criteria where issue flagged as poor quality
<b>Children’s Play</b>		
255	Village Hall Field, South Croxton	Accessibility [Poor] Safety and Security [Poor]
287	Library Play Area, Rothley	Safety and Security [Poor]
366	London Road, Wymeswold	Condition of Other Facilities [Poor]
620	Winfield Park Play Area, Syston	Condition of Other Facilities [Poor]
709	Seagrave Play Area, Seagrave	Safety and Security [Poor] Condition of Play Facilities [Poor]
730	Highreeds End Play Area, Sileby	Condition of Other Facilities [Poor]
<b>Teenage Facilities</b>		
8	Long Furrow Teenage, East Goscote	Condition of Other Facilities [Poor]
715	Farnham Road Ball Wall, Loughborough	Condition of Other Facilities [Poor] Management and Maintenance [Poor]
727	Stadon Road Teenage, Anstey	General Characteristics [Poor]

9.35 The annual inspection reports should be used to guide the prioritisation of investment at existing facilities in the short term as the situation in relation to improvements and maintenance changes quickly. However, Figure 59 should be used to identify a number of investment priorities that are currently required as well as the projects identified by the parish councils in Figure 22 and Charnwood Borough Council in Figure 23.

## Testing of alternative standards

### Assessment Criteria

9.25 The assessment criteria are developed from current practice nationally, and on the adopted standards across Charnwood’s benchmark comparator authorities.

### Fields in Trust

9.27 The Fields In Trust report of January 2015 (*Review of the Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play, Phase 2 Survey Findings for England and Wales*) found that the median level of provision for Designated Play Space was 0.25 ha per 1000, and the median accessibility standards for LEAPs was 400m and for NEAPs was 1000m. Where standards had been provided for other facilities, such as skate parks and Multi-Use Games areas, these had a median of 660m or alternatively 15 minutes walk. These were very largely in line with the Fields In Trust recommendations, but no detail has been provided as to the design or quality of sites.

9.28 The current standard Provision for Children and Young People in Charnwood is for a facility within a 10 minute walk (480m) of the population. This level of provision appears to be lower than the national average reported by FiT.

### Comparators

9.29 Comparisons with the CIPFA benchmark authorities show some degree of variation in the adopted standards and the approach towards them, see Figure 60.

Figure 60: Comparators for Children’s Play and Youth provision

	Children’s Play and Teenage facilities	
	Quantity (Sites per 1000)	Accessibility (m)
Charnwood	No standard	480m walk
<b>CIPFA comparators</b>		
Broxtowe	No standards	
Colchester	0.05 – Children’s Play 0.05 - Teenagers	10 minute walk 15 minute walk
Huntingdonshire	0.8 – combined	10 minute walk (480m) 15 minute walk (720m)
Stafford	0.045 – Children’s Play 0.03 (Urban) 0.02 (Rural) – Teenagers	LAPs – 300m LEAPs – 450m 15 mins (900m)

### *Emerging best practice*

**9.41** The standardised approach towards the provision of LEAPs and NEAPs is well adopted nationally, although the application on the ground seems to be more flexible. Natural play is sometimes seen as an easy “get out” by developers, but the quality of the facilities and the need for on-going maintenance means that this not a cheap option. Since expectations vary greatly and there are no set design standards, the assessment and future standards for Charnwood should be based on the FIT acknowledged criteria for LEAP and NEAP provision.

### Quantity

**9.41** The standard recommended by the Fields in Trust in October 2015 suggests that the median provision per 1000 of Designated Equipped Playing Space should be 0.25 ha per 1000 for new provision.

**9.42** It is proposed that the standard for new developments in Charnwood should be 0.25 ha per 1000 but that this should be for Designated Equipped Playing Space, including teenage provision and for new provision only.

**9.43** The size of new LEAPs and NEAPs should be as set out in line with the current FIT recommendations, which are as a minimum: 400 sqm active zone for a LEAP and 1000 sqm active zone for a NEAP. Full details of the requirements are set out in Appendix 8 and also reference buffer zones to adjacent housing.

**9.44** Each of the Towns and Service Centres should have a full network of LEAPs, NEAPs and teenage facilities.

**9.45** Each of the Other Settlements and Smaller Villages and Hamlets should have an equipped play area where the population is greater than 200 people and where there is a local case for need.

### Accessibility

**9.46** The accessibility of LEAPs and NEAPs should be in line with the FIT recommendations. These are:

- 400 m for a LEAP
- 1000 m for a NEAP
- 1000 m for teenage facilities

**9.47** The proposed accessibility standards are mapped in Figure 61.

### Quality

**9.48** New LEAPs or NEAPs should meet the FIT standards.

- 9.43 New youth provision should reflect current best practice, and also take into account the needs expressed by local young people.

Figure 61: Proposed accessibility standards for Children's Play and Teenage Facilities

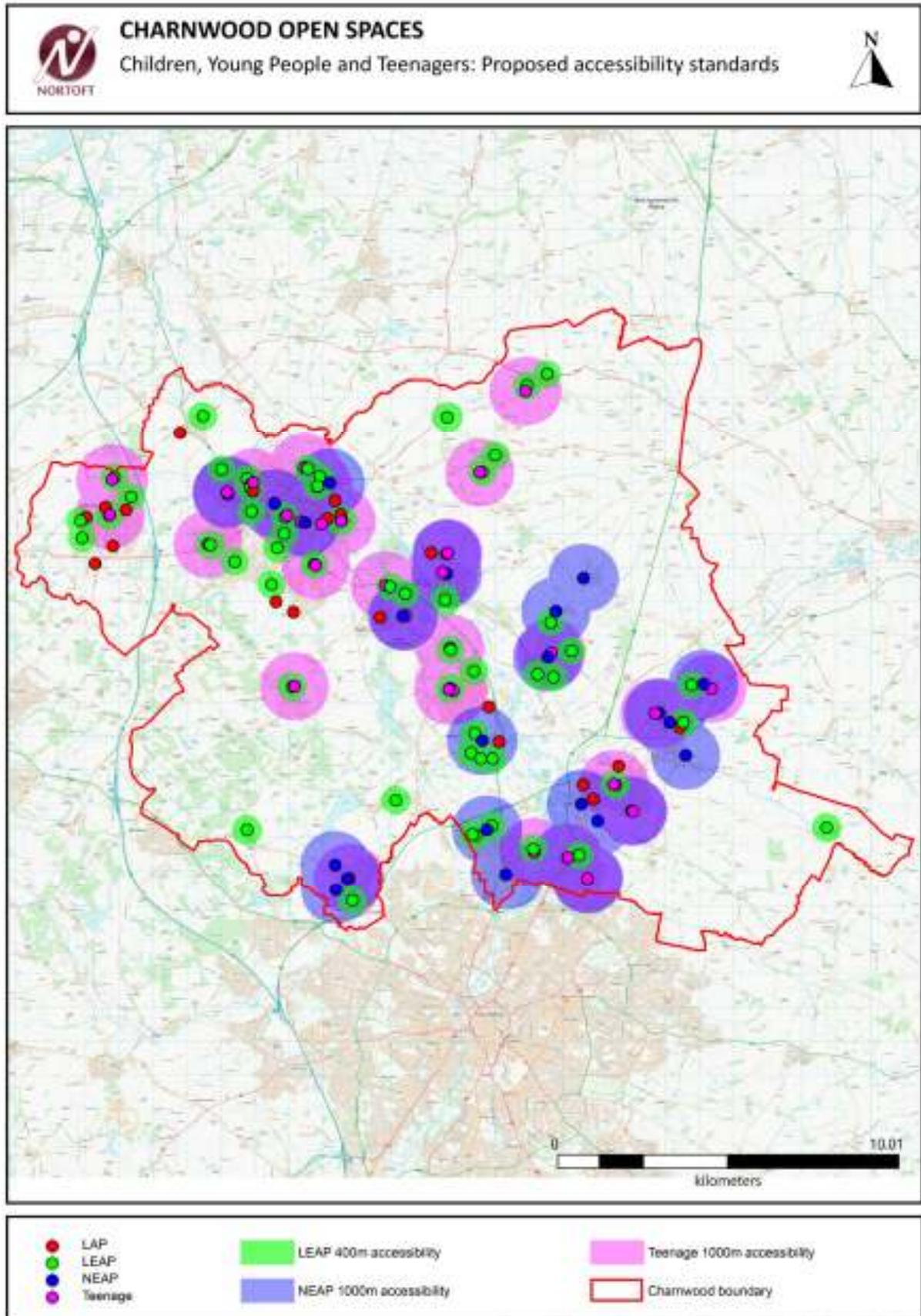


Figure 62: Proposed accessibility testing for Children's Play and Teenage Facilities

Parish/Ward	Population	Existing Children's Play Provision (Number of sites)	Existing Teenage Provision (Number of sites)	Proposed accessibility standard - 400m for LEAPs	Proposed accessibility standard – 1000m for NEAPs	Proposed accessibility standard - 1000m for teenage facilities
Loughborough Ashby Ward	6487	2	1	Partial accessibility coverage	Partial accessibility coverage	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Dishley	4195	2	0	Partial accessibility coverage	Full accessibility coverage	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Garendon Ward	5829	1	1	Partial accessibility coverage	Partial accessibility coverage	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Hastings Ward	6004	4	1	Partial accessibility coverage	Partial accessibility coverage	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Lemington Ward	6504	4	2	Partial accessibility coverage	Full accessibility coverage	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Nanpantan Ward	5440	1	0	Partial accessibility coverage	Partial accessibility coverage	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Outwoods Ward	5697	3	0	Partial accessibility coverage	Partial accessibility coverage	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Shelthorpe Ward	7416	2	1	Partial accessibility coverage	Partial accessibility coverage	No accessibility coverage

Parish/Ward	Population	Existing Children's Play Provision (Number of sites)	Existing Teenage Provision (Number of sites)	Proposed accessibility standard - 400m for LEAPs	Proposed accessibility standard – 1000m for NEAPs	Proposed accessibility standard - 1000m for teenage facilities
Loughborough Southfields Ward	6725	3	3	Full accessibility coverage	Full accessibility coverage	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Storer Ward	6070	4	1	Full accessibility coverage	Full accessibility coverage	Full accessibility coverage
Shepshed CP	13505	10	2	Partial accessibility coverage	Partial accessibility coverage	No accessibility coverage
Birstall CP	12216	6	1	Partial accessibility coverage	Full accessibility coverage	Partial accessibility coverage
Thurmaston CP	9668	3	2	Partial accessibility coverage	Full accessibility coverage	Full accessibility coverage
Anstey CP	6528	4	1	Partial accessibility coverage	Partial accessibility coverage	Partial accessibility coverage
Barrow upon Soar CP	5956	4	2	Partial accessibility coverage	Full accessibility coverage	Full accessibility coverage
Mountsorrel CP	8223	3	3	Partial accessibility coverage	Partial accessibility coverage	Full accessibility coverage
Quorndon CP	5177	4	2	Partial accessibility coverage	Partial accessibility coverage	Partial accessibility coverage

Parish/Ward	Population	Existing Children's Play Provision (Number of sites)	Existing Teenage Provision (Number of sites)	Proposed accessibility standard - 400m for LEAPs	Proposed accessibility standard – 1000m for NEAPs	Proposed accessibility standard - 1000m for teenage facilities
Rothley CP	3897	7	0	Partial accessibility coverage	Partial accessibility coverage	Partial accessibility coverage
Sileby CP	7835	6	1	Partial accessibility coverage	Full accessibility coverage	Partial accessibility coverage
System CP	12804	7	2	Partial accessibility coverage	Partial accessibility coverage	Partial accessibility coverage

## Proposed Standards

**9.50** The following recommendations are therefore made for Children's Play and Teenage Facilities:

**9.51** The existing network of the equipped play areas and teenage provision should be regularly reviewed, including their quality. However, in principle, the existing network of equipped LEAPs, NEAPs and teenage facilities should be retained and enhanced. The existing network of LAPs should be maintained if appropriate, despite the council no longer promoting the provision of this type of play facility.

**9.52** As new developments are considered then new children's play and teenage provision should be required, unless there is sufficient capacity within an accessible site. In which case, the equivalent value of new play provision should be used to improve the existing site(s) in order to enhance their capacity to cater for the additional demand.

**9.53** New sites should meet the revised standards below (once adopted), including minimum size, accessibility and design. Where provision is not appropriate on site, then the equivalent value of contributions should be made off site.

### Quantity

- 0.25ha per 1000 for new provision
  - Of which 400 sqm active zone should be for a LEAP
  - 1000 sqm active zone should be for a NEAP

### Accessibility

- 400m (LEAP)
- 1000m (NEAP)
- 1000m (Teenage Facility)

### Quality

- Prepared in accordance with an agreed plan.
- Facilities should be appropriate and designed through consultation with children and young people.
- They should be clean and litter free, well maintained and should also contain seats, litter bins and be dog free (where appropriate). The site should be appropriately located and constructed to meet minimum LEAP/NEAP criteria set out in the FiT standards.

**9.54** A full network of provision should be achieved in each of the Towns and Service Centres.

**9.55** Each of the Other Settlements and Smaller Villages and Hamlets should have a LEAP where the population is greater than 200 people and where there is an identified local need.

**9.56** The approach towards the delivery of children's play and youth facilities in association with new housing should be:

- Where any housing development is fully within the catchment of an existing LEAP, NEAP or teenage facility, then developers' contributions should be sought towards improvements and or extensions of the site(s). Where it is not possible or appropriate to enhance or increase the capacity at the existing facility, new provision may be required on site.
- For development sites with any housing located more than 400m from a LEAP, or 1000 m from a NEAP or youth facility then the approach should be, *in priority order*:
  - Develop on site new LEAP or NEAP, and teenage facilities as required to meet the standard
  - If not possible on site, then to a new site(s) immediately adjacent to the housing development and with safe, lit access on foot.

## SECTION 10: ALLOTMENTS

- 10.1** Allotments provide opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce providing landscaped open space for the local area that can promote improved physical and mental health. Allotments can therefore improve well being and the quality of life of communities by providing; a cheap source of good food; healthy outdoor exercise and social interaction; and, enhancement of the biodiversity and green infrastructure in an area.
- 10.2** They can benefit all groups, from those on limited income, to those who are financially secure but take pleasure in growing their own food. By providing economic, social and environmental benefits, allotments contribute towards the three core principles of sustainable development. Allotments play an important role in providing areas of green space within urban environments.
- 10.3** The Open Spaces Strategy 2013 uses the following definition:
- Sites laid out for people to grow their own vegetables, fruit and flowers as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.*
- 10.4** There are a total of 32 allotment sites in Charnwood with a combined area of 36.2 ha.
- 10.5** Nationally there are no formal benchmark standards of provision for allotments but the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) recommends a quantitative standard of 20 plots per 1000 households (approximately 20 plots per 2200 people). The size of an allotment plot is 250 square metres (0.025ha). This standard is equivalent to 0.23ha of allotments per 1000 people.

### Legislation

- 10.6** Statutory allotment sites are those that a local authority has acquired for the purpose of allotment gardening, while temporary sites have been acquired for other purposes and are being used as allotments in the interim. Statutory sites have legal protection while temporary ones do not. Some allotments may have been in use for years and the reason for acquisition in the first place may be unclear. Their legal status and level of protection may be uncertain. However, if a site has been in continued use for a number of years as an allotment site, it may be treated as a statutory site.
- 10.7** If an allotment is on land owned by the local authority then it will either be classed as a statutory or temporary site. Statutory sites are protected by the Allotments Acts, in particular the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908. Most of the allotment sites are the responsibility of parish councils, Charnwood Borough Council, or charitable bodies.
- 10.8** There are essentially four key requirements on a local authority in relation to allotments. It needs to ensure that it is:

- Advertising allotment provision;
- Supplying enough plots to satisfy demand;
- Providing a tenancy agreement with a compensation clause;
- Keeping allotment sites in a “fit for use” condition.

**10.9** There is no generally accepted procedure for assessing the gap between current use levels and the potential need for allotments that would be realised if the allotments were actively promoted.

**10.10** The Local Government Association’s report of 2010, A Place to Grow: A supplementary document to growing in the community, summarises the duty on local authorities (outside of Inner London) to provide allotment gardens where they consider there is a demand for them is contained in the 1908 Small Holdings and Allotments Act s23, with subsequent amendments and case law. Requests for allotments submitted by at least six local taxpayers or electors must be taken into account in considering whether a demand exists. Having determined that there is a demand, the local authority must be able to demonstrate that it has a strategy in place to meet that demand. Although the law imposes no deadline for eventual provision, an interested party may be able to make a claim for judicial review in the High Court against an authority that does not fulfil its duty in a fair and reasonable way.

**10.11** A local authority can put land it already owns into use as allotments. It also has powers to acquire land for allotments by lease, by compulsory hiring or (failing that) by compulsory purchase under the 1908 Small Holdings and Allotments Act s25 and subsequent legislation not specific to allotments. The exercise of these powers, however, depends on resource allocations to meet acquisition costs, and thus on the strength of the case made for prioritising allotments against other claims on capital budgets.

**10.12** The planning requirements for new allotment sites are more difficult to specify in categorical terms. In the very simplest case, the act of converting land previously used for agriculture into allotment gardens does not constitute development requiring planning permission (following *Crowborough Parish Council v Secretary of State for the Environment* [1981]). Planning permission may be required, however, for allotment gardens established on land not previously under agricultural use.

**10.13** Furthermore, it follows from the need to make a broader case for allotments in order to help secure the capital resources required, and to satisfy the demands of new plot holders for good facilities, that ancillary investments (such as vehicle access and fencing) are likely to be made that do constitute development. Planning permission may also be required for sheds and greenhouses, particularly if they are large or on a permanent base. However, the erection of sheds or other buildings by a local authority may be ‘permitted development’ that does not require a planning application to be made. Where substantial buildings are to be included in a new site

they will be subject to the Building Regulations, but some buildings may also be partially exempt as agricultural buildings used exclusively for storage.

## Current provision and assessment

10.14 The 32 allotment sites in Charnwood are mapped in Figure 64 together with the existing accessibility catchment standard of 720m.

10.15 Overall, the current level of provision of allotments across the district is 0.22 ha per 1000.

### Stakeholder consultation

10.16 The Individuals survey identified that allotments are used by only a small proportion of the survey respondents, about 9%. Of these users most visit an occasional basis, with only about 2% of the survey respondents using them on a monthly basis or more frequently.

10.17 Of those expressing an opinion about allotment provision, about 30% feel that there is too little, whilst just over 20% consider that there is about the right amount of provision. Allotments are only really important for about 13% of respondents, with most people having little interest.

10.18 Other than for additional provision, the existing sites are generally seen as being “fine as they are”.

10.19 The expected travel time to allotments is 10 minutes.

## Testing the existing standards

10.20 The existing adopted standards for allotments are:

*Figure 63: Existing adopted standards for Allotments*

	Quantity per 1000 people	Accessibility
Allotments	0.33ha	720m

10.21 The testing of the existing standards in relation to quantity and accessibility are summarised in Figure 65 for the Loughborough wards, Towns and Service Centres within Charnwood. Testing of existing standards for all parishes and wards within Charnwood is provided in Appendix 6.

## Quantity

- 10.27** The average provision across Charnwood is 0.22 ha per 1000. Loughborough Southfields and Lemyngton are the only two wards to have a surplus in provision compared to the standard.
- 10.28** 4 of the Loughborough wards; Ashby, Dishley, Garendon and Nanpantan do not have any provision within the ward boundary. As a result, there is a need for additional allotment space within Loughborough (equating to over 9ha in total). For example, Ashby would require 2.14 ha of allotments to meet the existing standard. Provision of allotment space in Birstall does not meet the existing quantity standard. Thurmaston does not have an allotment within the parish boundary.
- 10.24** Outside of Loughborough, only two Service Centres; Rothley and Sileby have a theoretical surplus of allotment space. For Rothley this equates to only 0.05 ha. All other towns and Service Centres have at least one site within their boundary.
- 10.25** Only 6 of the 24 smaller settlements have an allotment, however all have a surplus in the quantity provided when compared to the existing standard.
- 10.26** The existing allotments in Charnwood are all very well used, with only one site (Barrow Road Allotments in Sileby) showing a considerable number of vacant plots (Figure 66).

## Accessibility

- 10.27** The existing accessibility standard is only achieved in 2 of the Loughborough wards; Hastings and Southfields.
- 10.28** The remaining wards, towns, the Leicester Principal Urban Area and Service Centres all have at least a partial coverage from the existing accessibility standard. Two of the Loughborough wards; Storer and Outwoods display a near complete coverage from the existing accessibility standard.
- 10.29** The 4 urban wards without any allotment provision are partially covered from provision outside of the ward.
- 10.30** All Service Centres have at least a partial coverage using the existing accessibility standard.
- 10.31** 4 of the smaller settlements have a complete coverage from the existing accessibility standard, with a further two showing a coverage for the majority of the settlement. The remaining 18 settlements do not have access to an allotment within the existing 720m standard.

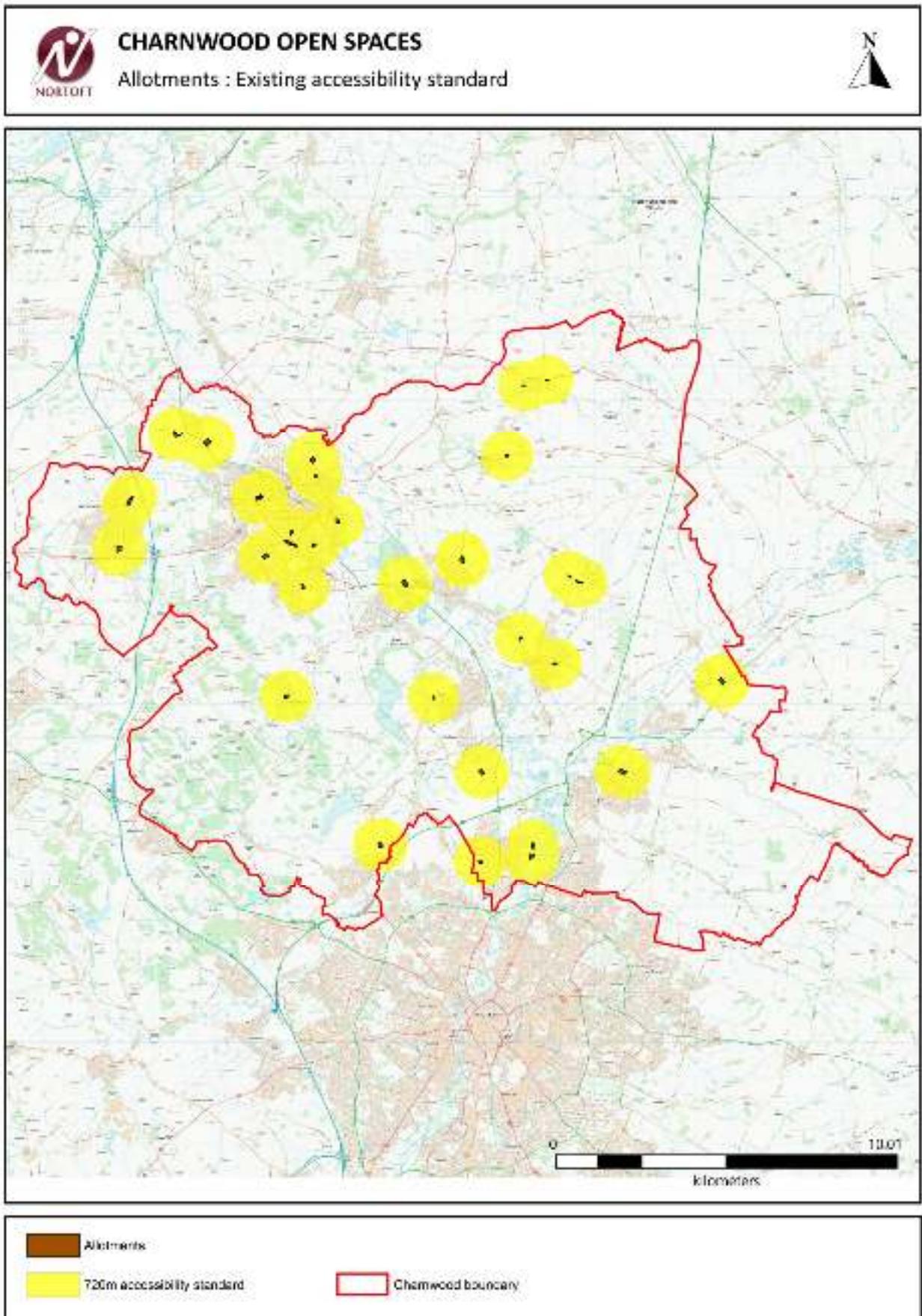
## Quality

~~10.27~~ The quality of the allotment sites was assessed against criteria which links to the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG). These included:

- General characteristics
- Accessibility
- Facilities
- Amenity value
- Recreational value

~~10.32~~ The quality of the allotment sites across much of the borough were good, however a number of sites were flagged for quality issues. A summary of sites with quality issues is provided in Figure 66.

Figure 64: Existing accessibility standards for allotments



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Figure 65: Testing the existing standards for allotments

Parish/Ward	Population	Existing Provision (total ha)	Existing Provision standard (ha / 1000 popn)	Existing provision per 1000 popn	Applying provision standard (surplus or deficit / 1000 popn)	Impact of applied provision standard (surplus or deficit by total ha)	Accessibility of main settlement (15 min walk/720m)
Loughborough Ashby Ward	6487	0.00	0.33	0.00	-0.33	-2.14	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Dishley	4195	0.00	0.33	0.00	-0.33	-1.38	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Garendon Ward	5829	0.00	0.33	0.00	-0.33	-1.92	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Hastings Ward	6004	1.05	0.33	0.17	-0.16	-0.93	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Lemyngton Ward	6504	2.18	0.33	0.34	0.01	0.04	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Nanpantan Ward	5440	0.00	0.33	0.00	-0.33	-1.80	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Outwoods Ward	5697	1.57	0.33	0.28	-0.05	-0.31	Partial accessibility coverage
Loughborough Shelthorpe Ward	7416	0.74	0.33	0.10	-0.23	-1.71	Partial accessibility coverage

Parish/Ward	Population	Existing Provision (total ha)	Existing Provision standard (ha / 1000 popn)	Existing provision per 1000 popn	Applying provision standard (surplus or deficit / 1000 popn)	Impact of applied provision standard (surplus or deficit by total ha)	Accessibility of main settlement (15 min walk/720m)
Loughborough Southfields Ward	6725	3.38	0.33	0.50	0.17	1.16	Full accessibility coverage
Loughborough Storer Ward	6070	1.75	0.33	0.29	-0.04	-0.25	Partial accessibility coverage
Shepshed CP	13505	3.92	0.33	0.29	-0.04	-0.53	Partial accessibility coverage
Birstall CP	12216	3.37	0.33	0.28	-0.05	-0.66	Partial accessibility coverage
Thurmaston CP	9668	0.00	0.33	0.00	-0.33	-3.19	Partial accessibility coverage
Anstey CP	6528	1.55	0.33	0.24	-0.09	-0.60	Partial accessibility coverage
Barrow upon Soar CP	5956	1.92	0.33	0.32	-0.01	-0.05	Partial accessibility coverage
Mountsorrel CP	8223	0.39	0.33	0.05	-0.28	-2.33	Partial accessibility coverage
Quorndon CP	5177	2.24	0.33	0.43	0.10	0.53	Partial accessibility coverage
Rothley CP	3897	1.34	0.33	0.34	0.01	0.05	Partial accessibility coverage

Parish/Ward	Population	Existing Provision (total ha)	Existing Provision standard (ha / 1000 popn)	Existing provision per 1000 popn	Applying provision standard (surplus or deficit / 1000 popn)	Impact of applied provision standard (surplus or deficit by total ha)	Accessibility of main settlement (15 min walk/720m)
Sileby CP	7835	1.07	0.33	0.14	-0.19	-1.52	Partial accessibility coverage
System CP	12804	2.04	0.33	0.16	-0.17	-2.18	Partial accessibility coverage

Figure 66: Allotments – vacancy and flagged quality summary

Site ID	Site Name	Percentage of vacant plots	Quality criteria where issue flagged for being poor quality
44	Swan Street Allotments, Seagrave CP	13%	General Characteristics Accessibility Amenity
144	Mountfields Allotments, Loughborough Southfields Ward	3%	
146	Forest Road, Loughborough Southfields Ward	10%	
148	Forest Road, Loughborough Outwoods Ward	5%	Accessibility
149	Hazel Road, Loughborough Shelthorpe Ward	0%	
150	Great Central Road, Loughborough Hastings Ward	8%	
151	Meadow Lane, Loughborough Lemyngton Ward	22%	
152	Alan Moss Road - Phase 1, Loughborough Storer Ward	16%	
153	Alan Moss Road - Phase 2, Loughborough Storer Ward	17%	
154	North Road, Loughborough Lemyngton Ward	0%	
155	Park Road, Loughborough Southfields Ward	12%	
156	Beacon Road, Loughborough Southfields Ward	11%	
219	Main Street, Woodhouse CP	14%	
267	off Melton Road Allotments, Rearsby CP	1%	
301	Halstead Road Allotments, Mountsorrel CP	0%	
309	Barrow Road, Quorndon CP	0%	
364	London Lane Allotments, Wymeswold CP	5%	
365	East Road Allotments, Wymeswold CP	0%	Accessibility
382	Upper Church Street, Syston CP	5%	
416	Melton Road, Burton on the Wolds CP	14%	
425	Greengate Lane Allotments, Birstall CP	0%	
426	Meadow Lane Allotments (North), Birstall CP	17%	
427	Meadow Lane Allotments (South), Birstall CP	8%	Amenity Value

431	Shepshed Road, Hathern CP	4%	
439	Derby Road, Hathern CP	10%	
468	Butthole Lane, Shepshed CP	11%	Accessibility
469	Cambridge Street, Shepshed CP	0%	
500	Nottingham Road, Barrow upon Soar CP	15%	Accessibility Amenity Value
522	Anstey Lane Allotments, Anstey CP	0%	
543	Cemetary Road, Sileby CP	11%	
544	Barrow Road Allotments, Sileby CP	42%	General Characteristics Accessibility Facilities Amenity Recreational Value
603	Farmers Way Allotments, Rothley CP	9%	Amenity Value

## Updating the existing standard

### Assessment Criteria

**10.34** The assessment criteria are developed from current best practice nationally, and on the adopted standards across Charnwood's benchmark comparator authorities.

### *Fields in Trust*

**10.35** The Fields In Trust report of January 2015 (Review of the Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play, Phase 2 Survey Findings for England and Wales) found that the median level of allotment provision was 0.3 ha per 1000 with a median accessibility catchment of 1000m or a 15 minute walk.

### *NSALG*

**10.36** The NSALG's leaflet, *Creating a new allotment site* provides some, limited design guidance, including:

- That an acre of land can house 12-15 standard size plots (approx 250 sq m each);
- All paths should be no less than 1.5 m wide, but ideally 1.7 m wide;
- The main gates should be wide enough to allow large delivery vehicles.

**10.37** NSALG recommends that allotment catchments should be 1000m.

### *Comparators*

**10.38** Comparisons with the CIPFA benchmark authorities show that Charnwood's rate of provision is very similar to Huntingdonshire and close to the urban standard in Stafford. Colchester has a lower standard closer to Charnwood's actual current provision.

Figure 67: Comparators for Allotments

	Allotments	
	Quantity (Ha per 1000)	Accessibility (m)
Charnwood	0.33	720m
<b>Comparator authorities</b>		
Broxtowe	No standard	
Colchester	0.2	720m 15 min drive
Huntingdonshire	0.32	720m
Stafford	0.35 Urban 0.16 Rural	600m 10 min drive

### Standard for quantity

10.39 It is proposed that the existing standard be carried forward:

- 0.33 ha per 1000

10.40 New allotment sites can be provided directly by the local authority or parish council where appropriate sites are available and there is an identified local need. Contributions from developers can also be sought towards the costs of developing new sites.

10.41 If allotment land is made redundant, alternative uses of the site should be considered. If allotment land is genuinely surplus due to falling demand, and the council is unable to promote sufficient level of allotment use to secure proper management of a particular site, then consideration should be given to alternative uses. These could be, for example, community gardens or nature reserves. However each site would need to be considered on its own merits to see if this would be appropriate.

### Standard for accessibility

10.42 A 1000m catchment is recommended which is the NSALG recommended catchment. This is illustrated in the map in Figure 68 and discussed in Figure 69.

### *Standard for design and quality*

10.43 Charnwood has an existing quality standard from its 2013 Open Spaces Strategy and this is proposed to be taken forward:

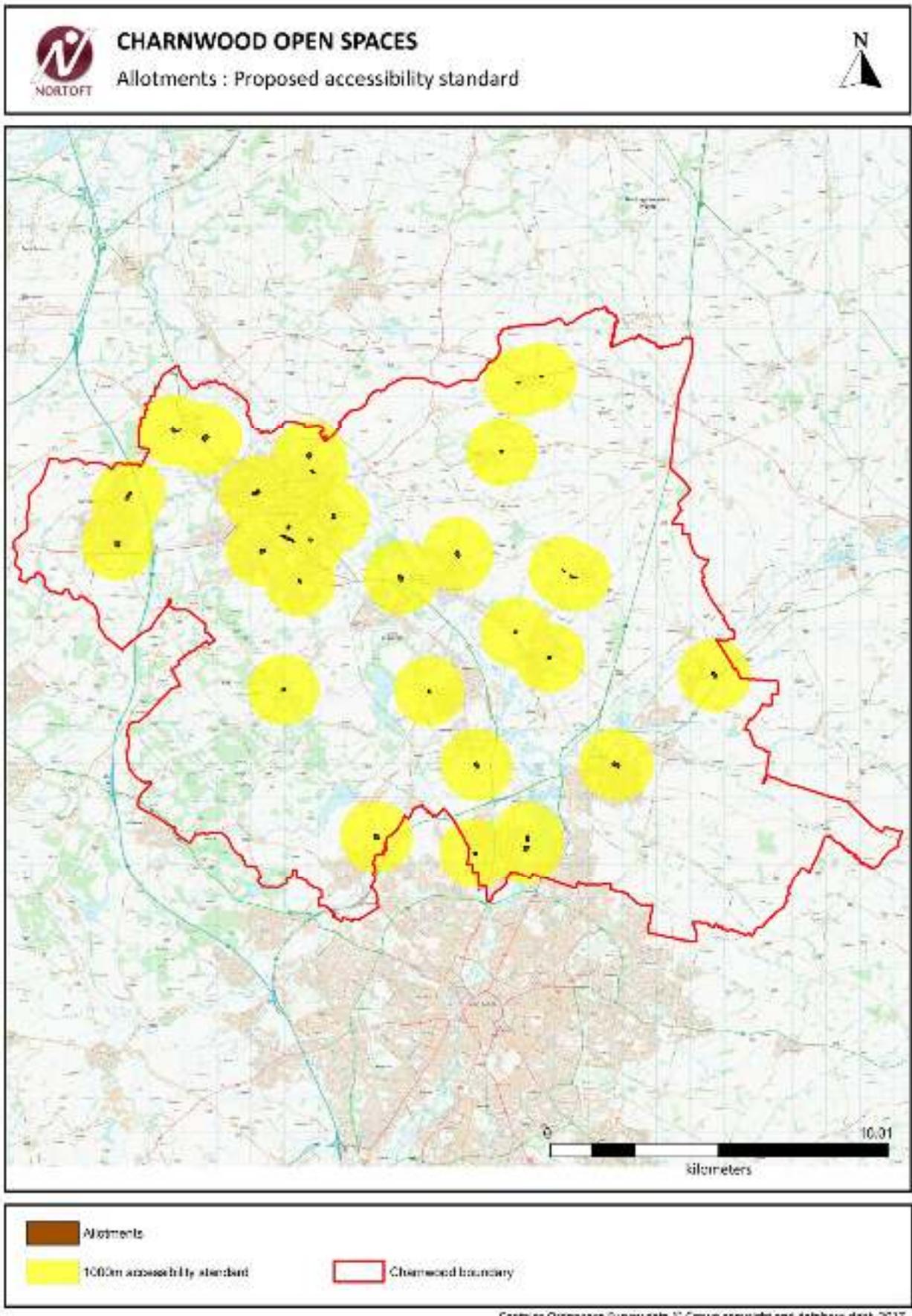
- Adoption standard: A high quality allotment site that is fit for purpose. Including the following features: Loam to a minimum depth of 400mm with few stones; no shading or root invasion by large trees; 2 metre perimeter palisade fencing and gates; water supply with taps or troughs at appropriate intervals; appropriate hard surfaced vehicle access throughout the site, waste container storage and parking; sheds provided adjacent to each plot; onsite toilet; plots laid out with plot markers with 500mm grass strips between plots. Plots ploughed to an agreed depth. Prepared in accordance with an agreed plan.
- Allotments should be clean, litter free and secure. It is desirable to provide appropriate parking, toilets, water supply and managed appropriate access routes.

### *Investment priority*

10.44 It is also recommended that allotments become an investment priority for Charnwood. Feedback from the stakeholder consultations, the high levels of use in existing sites and the borough wide shortage of allotment space indicate that additional allotment space is required.

10.45 Where possible, additional allotment space should be provided in the towns and Service Centres, as typically the supply of land suitable for allotments is lower, but the demand for allotments are higher than in rural areas.

Figure 68: Allotments across Charnwood – proposed accessibility



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Figure 69: Testing of proposed allotment standards

Parish/Ward	Population	Existing Provision (total ha)	Existing Provision standard (ha / 1000 popn)	Existing provision per 1000 popn	Applying provision standard (surplus or deficit / 1000 popn)	Impact of applied provision standard (surplus or deficit by total ha)	Accessibility of main settlement (15 min walk/1000m)
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Parish/Ward	Population	Existing Provision (total ha)	Existing Provision standard (ha / 1000 popn)	Existing provision per 1000 popn	Applying provision standard (surplus or deficit / 1000 popn)	Impact of applied provision standard (surplus or deficit by total ha)	Accessibility of main settlement (15 min walk/1000m)
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System CP	12804	2.04	0.33	0.16	-0.17	-2.18	Partial accessibility coverage

## Proposed Standards

~~10.46~~ The current average provision of allotment space in Charnwood is significantly lower (0.22 ha per 1000) than the existing standard of 0.33.

~~10.47~~ There is a high level of take up of allotment space as most allotments have very little spare capacity despite some quality issues flagged in the audit.

~~10.48~~ The following standards are proposed for allotments:

~~10.49~~ The existing allotment sites should be retained and improved so that they are all high quality. New allotment sites should be developed in the towns and Service Centres to meet the proposed standards. Elsewhere new allotment sites should be encouraged and supported where there is sufficient justified need.

### Quantity

- 0.33ha per 1000

### Quality

- Adoption standard: A high quality allotment site that is fit for purpose. Including the following features: Loam to a minimum depth of 400mm with few stones; no shading or root invasion by large trees; 2 metre perimeter palisade fencing and gates; water supply with taps or troughs at appropriate intervals; appropriate hard surfaced vehicle access throughout the site, waste container storage and parking; sheds provided adjacent to each plot; onsite toilet; plots laid out with plot markers with 500mm grass strips between plots. Plots ploughed to an agreed depth. Prepared in accordance with an agreed plan.
- Allotments should be clean, litter free and secure. It is desirable to provide appropriate parking, toilets, water supply and managed appropriate access routes.

### Accessibility

- 1000m

~~10.50~~ For new developments it is proposed that:

- For all new housing developments the approach should be, *in priority order*:
  - Develop on site new allotment space of a minimum size according to the authority's allotment standards
  - If not possible on site, then:
    - site adjacent to the housing development or within 1000m of the centre of the site

- contributions towards improvements (including extension) at the closest allotment site

## SECTION 11: CIVIC SPACES

11.1 Civic spaces include civic and market squares, other hard surfaced community areas designed for pedestrians and a number of village greens. The primary purpose of civic spaces is the provision of a setting for civic buildings, public demonstrations and community events.

11.2 Civic spaces can be important areas of open space in town centres. They can also provide a focal point for community interaction in villages. The definition in the Open Spaces Strategy 2013 was:

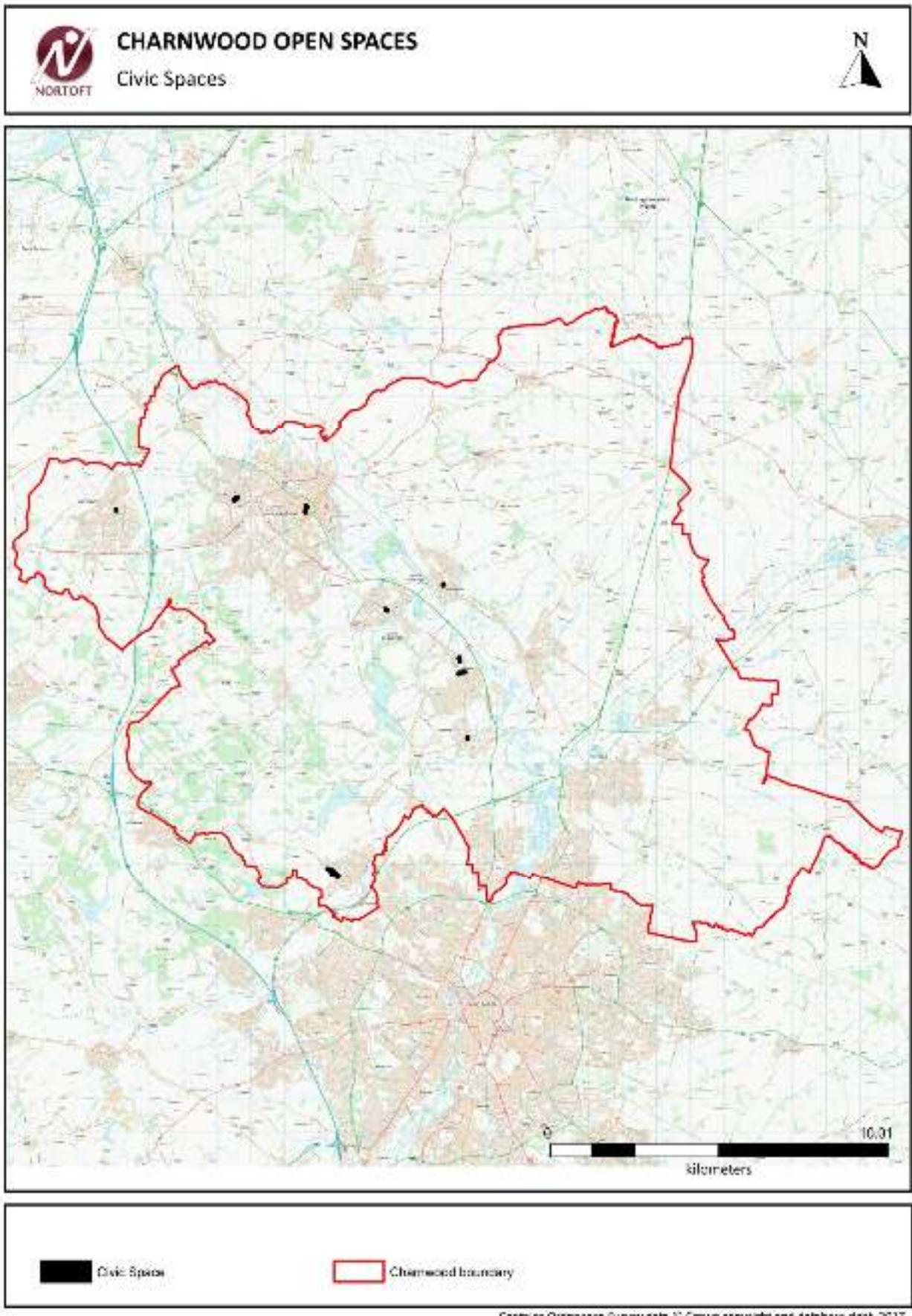
*Including civic and market squares and other hard surfaced community areas designed for pedestrians. The primary purpose of civic spaces is the provision of a setting for civic buildings and together with village greens also offer space for public demonstrations and community events etc and can often define the character of the local environment.*

11.3 The sites included in this assessment are those that were included in the 2010 audit, these are listed below. There are 10 sites within Charnwood which meet the criteria to be included in this typology. Some of these spaces are village greens however other village greens are included either in the Parks and Gardens section or the Amenity Green Space section, as appropriate. All of the registered village greens are listed in Figure 10. The civic spaces are listed in Figure 70 and mapped in Figure 71.

*Figure 70: Civic Spaces*

SITE ID	SITE NAME	Parish/Ward
36	The Green	Mountsorrel CP
49	The Green	Anstey CP
51	Knightthorpe Road	Loughborough Garendon Ward
140	Market Place	Loughborough Southfields Ward
281	Cross Green	Rothley CP
295	Peace Garden, Sileby Road	Mountsorrel CP
298	Buttermarket	Mountsorrel CP
326	High Street	Quorndon CP
465	Market Place	Shepshed CP
498	Industry Square	Barrow upon Soar CP

Figure 71: Civic spaces in Charnwood



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## Assessment criteria

- 11.4** There are currently no standards set within Charnwood for the quantity, quality or accessibility of Civic Spaces. PPG17 recognised that it was not realistic to set quantity or accessibility standards for Civic Spaces.
- 11.5** The accepted quality standard for open spaces generally is the Green Flag Award criteria. For Civic Spaces the following quality criteria are relevant:
- A welcoming Place
  - Healthy, Safe and Secure
  - Well Maintained and Clean
  - Conservation and Heritage
  - Community Involvement
  - Marketing

## Quality

- 11.6** The site was assessed against the Green Flag Criteria mentioned above. The scores varied considerably between the Green Flag criteria, with most sites scoring well on 'Well Maintained and Clean' and 'Conservation and Heritage' but poorly on 'A Welcoming Place' and 'Marketing'. The average site quality scores are provided in Figure 72.

*Figure 72: Average quality scores for Civic Spaces*

Category	Average quality score
<i>A welcoming place</i>	38%
<i>Health, safety and security</i>	42%
<i>Well maintained and clean</i>	71%
<i>Conservation and heritage</i>	93%
<i>Community involvement</i>	35%
<i>Marketing</i>	20%
<i>Ecosystem Services</i>	48%

- 11.7** With the exception of Market Place in Loughborough, all sites scored poorly on at least one of the Green Flag criteria. However, this is likely influenced by the specific features of a civic space not being well matched to the more generalised criteria of the Green Flag assessment.

## Proposed standards

- 11.8** The nature of this typology means that these sites are very specific to their locality. It is important for the quality of the current sites to be maintained and enhanced. However, it is not considered appropriate to set a quantity or accessibility for Civic Spaces.

## SECTION 12: CEMETERIES AND CHURCHYARDS

**12.1** Cemeteries and churchyards within urban areas can act as important public open spaces, especially when they are located in the centre of the town. Whilst their primary purpose is for quiet contemplation, these sites can provide an important site for local people or workers who use the sites for lunch time breaks or dog walking, if the site permits. They can also provide space for wildlife conservation within the urban areas.

**12.2** Additional to their use as open spaces, cemeteries and churchyards primary purpose are of course as burial grounds. Whilst burial space is out of the scope of this study, the previous Open Space Study 2010 made reference to the borough wide Burial Space Audit 2007. In 2015, an update for Loughborough Cemetery only was produced by Peter Mitchell Associates. As part of the consultation for this study each of the parish councils were asked about their burial space availability the detail of which can be found in Appendix 2. It has been identified that there are potentially shortfalls of burial space in Barrow, Quorn, Rothley, Shepshed, Sileby and Thurmaston.

### Current provision

**12.3** In Charnwood there are 53 cemeteries and churchyards. There are three sites within Loughborough town, 2 within Shepshed and at least one in all of the Service Centres. The majority of sites are used solely for their main purpose as burial grounds. The cemeteries and churchyards within the district are shown on Figure 73.

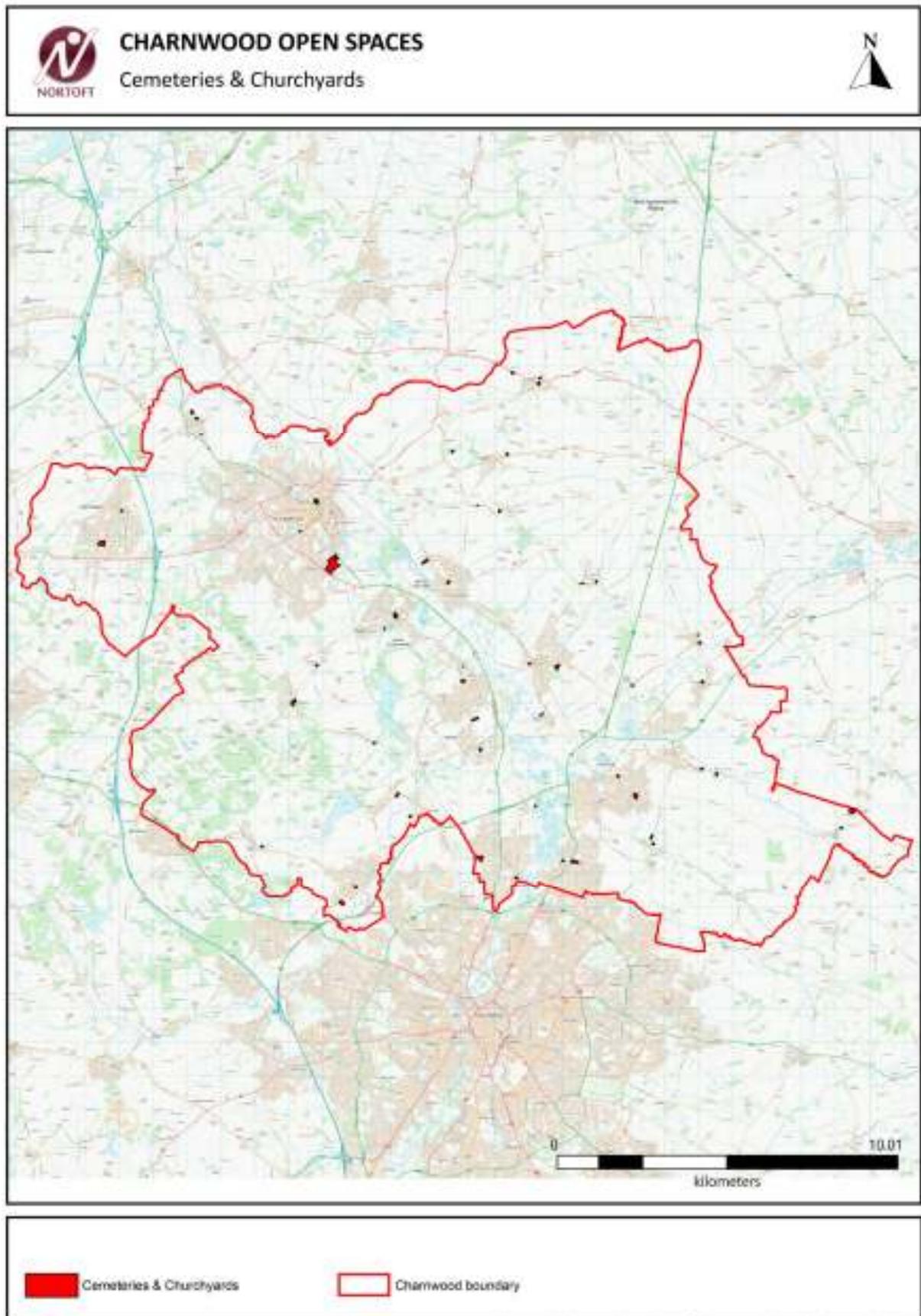
### Assessment criteria

**12.4** There are currently no standards set within Charnwood for the quantity, quality or accessibility of Cemeteries and Churchyards for recreational use and PPG17 recognised that it was not realistic to set quantity or accessibility standards for this typology.

**12.5** The accepted quality standard for open spaces generally is the Green Flag Award criteria. For spaces such as Cemeteries and Churchyards the following quality criteria are relevant:

- A Welcoming Place
- Healthy, Safe and Secure
- Well Maintained and Clean

Figure 73: Churchyards and cemeteries within Charnwood



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## Quantity

- 12.6** The existing provision of Cemeteries and Churchyards equates to 42.84 ha. Sites are relatively evenly distributed throughout the borough.
- 12.7** The previous study identified 46 sites within Charnwood, compared with 53 sites identified during the summer 2017 site assessments.

## Quality

- 12.8** The sites were assessed against the Green Flag Criteria mentioned above. The average quality scores are provided below in Figure 74. All of the Green Flag categories scored reasonably well.
- 12.9** As with Civic Spaces, the specific components of a Cemetery and Churchyard are not easily assessed by the generalised Green Flag assessment. However, the only Green Flag category to have any flagged quality issues is 'Health, Safety and Security'.

*Figure 74: Quality scores for Cemeteries and Churchyards*

Category	Average quality score
<i>A welcoming place</i>	44%
<i>Health, safety and security</i>	51%
<i>Well maintained and clean</i>	46%
<i>Conservation and heritage</i>	46%
<i>Ecosystem Services</i>	51%

- 12.10** The sites which were flagged for poor quality are listed in Figure 75.

*Figure 75: Cemeteries and Churchyards flagged for quality issues*

Site ID	Site Name	Health, Safety and Security quality score
299	Christ Church, Mountsorrel	25%
300	St. Peters Church, Mountsorrel	25%
369	Barkby Road, Syston	29%
540	Cemetery Road, Sileby	25%
541	St. Marys Church, Sileby	29%

## Proposed standards

- 12.11** The nature of this typology means that these sites are very specific to their locality. It is important for the quality of the current site to be maintained and enhanced. However, it is not considered appropriate to set a quantity or accessibility standard for Cemeteries and Churchyards for recreational use in Charnwood.

## SECTION 13: IMPLEMENTATION

- 13.1** The implementation of the strategy will be achieved through a combination of approaches by Charnwood Borough Council and its partners. There are a number of recommendations emerging from the study which require specific actions and investment, and others which are more a matter of ensuring the protection of the existing network of open space sites. The formal planning standards and policies can be used as guidance for the negotiations of developers contributions linked to new housing.
- 13.2** Where there are no specific site proposals the overriding policy objective will be to protect and enhance the existing network of green spaces and associated facilities.

### Planning standards

- 13.3** A key output from the strategy is the development of proposed standards, particularly for new developments. The justification and details behind each of these planning standards are contained within the relevant assessment sections of the report.
- 13.4** These standards will be used to both justify the new provision and developers' contributions under the existing s106 planning arrangements as individual planning applications come forward.
- 13.5** For new housing developments, sites accommodating 10 dwellings or more will be required to contribute to open spaces provision as per the proposed standards in Figure 76. However, sites under this size would still be expected to have due regard to good design principles and appropriate garden and amenity space as required.

Figure 76: Proposed planning standards for open space

Open space type	Proposed planning standards for new developments		
	Quantity per 1,000 population	Accessibility	Quality
Parks and gardens	1.4ha per 1000	1200m in the Towns and Service Centres	<p>Green Flag Award</p> <p>Adoption standard: A regularly mowed smooth surfaced grassland space with tree and shrub planting suitable for a variety of informal outdoor recreation activities. Including features such as public gardens, footpaths, play areas, young people’s facilities, seating and litter bins.</p> <p>Prepared in accordance with an agreed plan.</p> <p>Clean and litter free, appropriate planting and well kept grass. It is desirable to include toilets, seating, footpaths, nature features, litter bins and safety features.</p> <p>They should have a clear entrance, boundaries and lighting.</p>
Amenity Green Space		400m for either Amenity Green Space or Parks and Gardens in the Towns, Service Centres and Other Settlements	<p>Adoption standard: A regularly mowed smooth surfaced grassland space. Including features such as tree and shrub planting and footpaths.</p> <p>Prepared in accordance with an agreed plan.</p> <p>Clean and litter free, regularly maintained and with well kept grass and appropriate planting. Where possible, sites should also contain litter bins, dog bins and seating and be safe and secure.</p>
Natural and Semi Natural Green Space	2.0ha per 1000 <i>(to be applied to new development only)</i>	800m	<p>Adoption standard: An accessible space with wildlife habitats to improve biodiversity. These may be predominantly woodland, water, meadow or a combination. Prepared in accordance with an agreed management plan.</p> <p>Clean and litter free, nature features, safe footpaths and appropriate planting. It is also desirable for sites to include water features, parking, dog walking facilities, seating, information and toilets.</p>

<p>Children's Play and provision for young people</p>	<p>0.25 ha per 1,000 of Designated Equipped Playing Space including teenage provision <i>(to be applied to new development only)</i></p>	<p>400m for LEAPs</p> <p>1000m for NEAPs</p> <p>1000m for teenage facilities</p> <p>Full network of NEAPs, LEAPs and Teenage facilities in the Towns and Service Centres</p> <p>Full network of LEAPs in the Other Settlements and Smaller Villages and Hamlets where the population is greater than 200 people and there is an identified local need.</p>	<p>Prepared in accordance with an agreed plan.</p> <p>Facilities should be appropriate and designed through consultation with children and young people.</p> <p>They should be clean and litter free, well maintained and should also contain seats, litter bins and be dog free (where appropriate). The site should be appropriately located and constructed to meet minimum LEAP/NEAP criteria set out in the FiT standards.</p>
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Allotments	0.33ha per 1000	1000m	<p>Adoption standard: A high quality allotment site that is fit for purpose. Including the following features: Loam to a minimum depth of 400mm with few stones; no shading or root invasion by large trees; 2 metre perimeter palisade fencing and gates; water supply with taps or troughs at appropriate intervals; appropriate hard surfaced vehicle access throughout the site, waste container storage and parking; sheds provided adjacent to each plot; onsite toilet; plots laid out with plot markers with 500mm grass strips between plots. Plots ploughed to an agreed depth. Prepared in accordance with an agreed plan.</p> <p>Allotments should be clean, litter free and secure. It is desirable to provide appropriate parking, toilets, water supply and managed appropriate access routes.</p>
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- 1.3.6** When considering the needs of an application which may be eligible to provide open space it will be important to assess the needs at the parish level for quantity, quality and accessibility. If the parish has a shortfall in quantity terms, then the development should provide for the typology based on the adopted standard. The quantity of provision will need to be at a level proportionate to the new development to make it CIL compliant. If when assessing the amount from a development this results in a surplus in the ward/parish, the Council should choose on a case by case basis whether all of the requirement is needed or just the amount to bring it in balance. The Council may choose to negotiate for an alternative open space, equivalent to the excess, where there is a known local need.
- 1.3.7** If a ward/parish has an oversupply of a particular typology and the existing supply is of a suitable quality and accessibility, then it will not normally be appropriate to seek additional provision. However, provision may still be required if the quality and/or accessibility of the existing supply is deemed deficient. This will need to be assessed on a case by case basis.
- 1.3.8** In the case where a typology is in surplus but another typology is in deficit, it will generally not be appropriate to seek larger provision of the typology in deficit if this is not CIL compliant. However, the Council, in negotiation with the developer, may agree to such a provision if there is an identified local need.



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