

South Tyneside Open Space Study (2023)



South Tyneside Council

(Final Version February 2023)

Ecology | Green Space | Community | GIS

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Glossary of Terms

Term	Meaning
ANGSt	Accessible Natural Green Space Standard
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
FIT	Fields In Trust (originally known as the 'National Playing Fields Association')
GI	Green Infrastructure
GIS	Geographic Information System
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LAP	Local Area for Play
LEAP	Local Equipped Area for Play
LSOA	Lower-layer Super Output Areas
MUGA	Multi Use Games Area
NEAP	Neighbourhood Equipped Play Area
NEWP	Natural Environment White Paper
NGB	National Governing Body
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NPPG	National Planning Practice Guidance
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PPG17	Planning Policy Guidance Note 17
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
STC	South Tyneside Council

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This Open Space Study has been undertaken by Ethos Environmental Planning (Ethos) to inform South Tyneside Council's decision-making processes in relation to open space provision. It will inform the Council's forthcoming Local Plan, will support strategic policies and assist in the determination of planning applications.

The Open Space Study is one of two reports provided as part of the overall study. The two reports are the:

- South Tyneside Council Open Space Study (2023) (this report); and the
- South Tyneside Council Consultation Report (2023).

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. It requires local planning authorities to set out policies to help enable communities to access high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation. These policies must be based on a thorough understanding of the local needs for such facilities and opportunities available for new provision.

High quality, multifunctional open spaces also play an important role in helping to tackle the current climate and ecological emergencies and in supporting the health and wellbeing of South Tyneside's residents, as part of the boroughs' wider green infrastructure network (The Council have commissioned a separate green infrastructure study). The Covid 19 pandemic has further highlighted the importance of access to high quality open spaces, and also the inequalities in access, which are linked to poor health outcomes.

The study has been carried out in-line with Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)¹ and the NPPF (last updated in July 2021). The assessment has primarily been affected by the omission of Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG 17) from the national policy framework. Whilst the government has not published anything specifically to replace this document, there is however, still a clear reference made in the new guidance to the principles and ideology established within PPG17. As such the underlying principles of this study have been informed by the former guidance provided in '*Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation*', and its Companion Guide '*Assessing Needs and Opportunities*', which is a tried and tested methodology and takes a consistent approach with many other local authorities.

¹ PPG is a web-based resource which brings together guidance on various planning topics in one place. It largely draws on the government's planning policies within the NPPF.

1.2 Purpose and scope of this report

The focus of the study is publicly accessible open space, including amenity green space, accessible natural green space, parks and recreation grounds, children’s play space and youth play space and also allotments (see Section 5 for further detail).

The overall aims of the open space study are to provide a robust and up-to-date evidence base to support the South Tyneside Local Plan and assist in the determination of planning applications. It will provide an accurate and clear assessment of future needs alongside providing evidence to inform investment and funding decisions.

The study updates the previous 2015 Open Space Study and Open Space Addendum (2019).

The Study meets the following objectives set out within the brief:

- Develop a clear understanding of open space quality and quantity standards in South Tyneside through an audit of current provision.
- Outline the current and future demand for open space typologies and identify clear deficiencies or surpluses in provision and options for addressing these.
- Recommend updated locally derived open space and recreation provision standards for quantity, quality, and accessibility.
- To provide strategic recommendations relating to the management of sites and potential enhancement of existing sites.
- Develop an action plan based on findings and recommendations of the Open Space Study.
- Provide an understanding of implications of the potential loss of areas of open space on local needs-based standards as a result of proposed site allocations delivered through the Local Plan.
- To provide information to justify the collection of Section 106 developer contributions towards open space quality and quantity management and improvements.

A separate Green Infrastructure Study has also been commissioned by the council.

1.3 Structure of the report

The study follows five key stages as summarised below:

- Step 1 – Identifying Local Needs
 - Step 2 – Audit of Existing Open Space Assets
 - Step 3 – Setting Local Standards
 - Step 4 – Applying Local Standards
 - Step 5 – Drafting Policy Recommendations
-

1.4 The Study Area

1.4.1 Overview



South Tyneside covers 64 sq.km and sits within the Tyne and Wear conurbation with natural boundaries including the River Tyne to the North and the North Sea to the East. Most of the Borough's coastline is protected by international and European environmental designations.

The Borough is relatively compact and predominantly urban in character with the built-up area covering about 60% of the land area. The largest town is South Shields with the smaller towns of Hebburn and Jarrow. To the south of the borough are the villages of Boldon, Cleadon and Whitburn, which are separated by farmland (The Tyne and Wear Green Belt).

In the 20th century the borough's economy centred around shipbuilding, coal mining and chemical industries but in more recent years the economy focuses on the service sector and has two enterprise zones of Holborn Riverside and the International Advanced Manufacturing Park (IAMP). South Tyneside is linked by the A194 and A19 to the national road network and also the Tyne & Wear Metro connects the borough to the rest of the Tyne and Wear conurbation.

1.4.2 Administrative Boundaries

In order to analyse the current provision and future requirements for open space across the study area, the following geographical areas have been used (see Figure 1):

- The study area (the borough boundary); and
- ward boundaries.

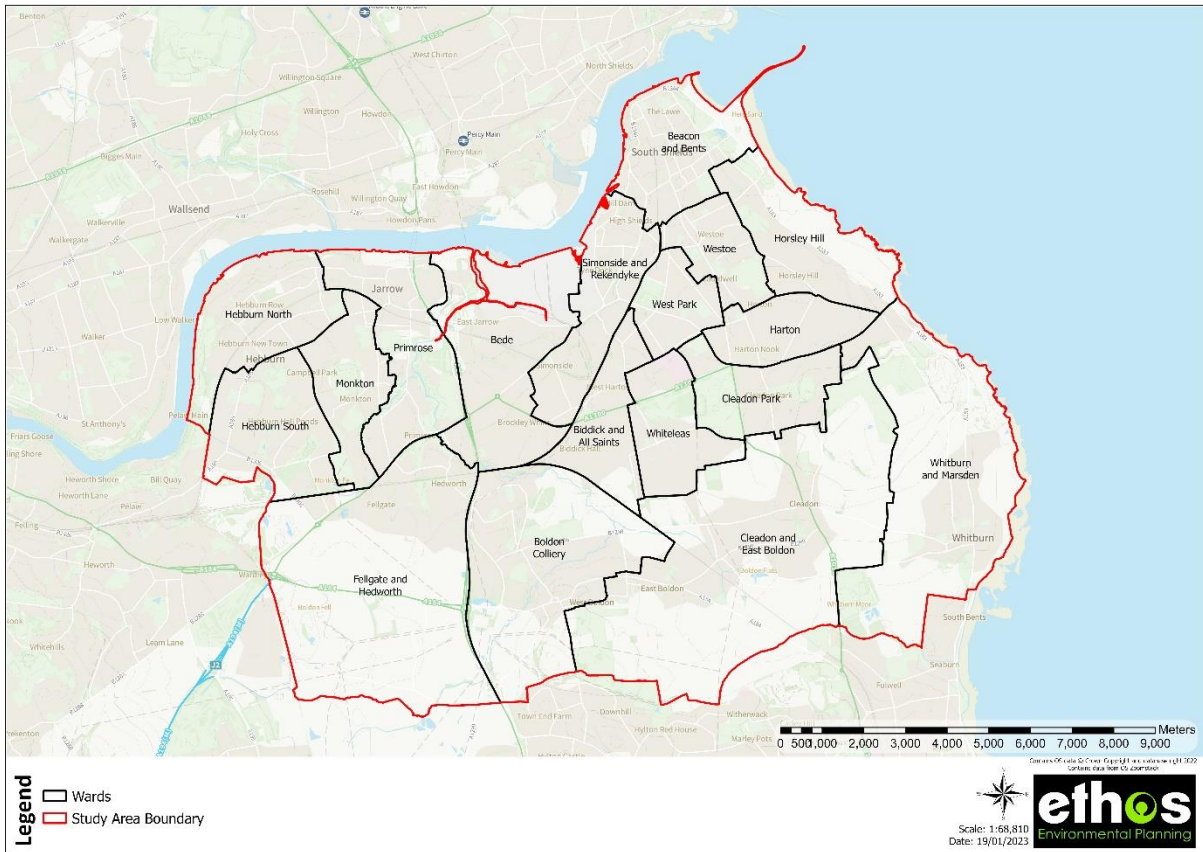


Figure 1 Study area

1.4.3 Population Statistics

Of particular relevance to this study are the ONS midyear 2020 population estimated by ward², which have been used as the basis for much of the current and future assessment of need for open space.

The population of the Study Area is 151,133. The breakdown by ward is shown in the table below.

Table 1 Population figures by ward

Ward	Population (ONS Mid-2020 Estimates)
Beacon and Bents	9,406
Bede	7,553
Biddick and All Saints	9,095
Boldon Colliery	9,385
Cleadon and East Boldon	8,381
Cleadon Park	7,659
Fellgate and Hedworth	7,366
Harton	8,265
Hebburn North	9,338
Hebburn South	8,809

² Census 2021 population figures by ward were not available at the time of writing.

Horsley Hill	9,174
Monkton	8,162
Primrose	8,096
Simonside and Rekendyke	9,299
West Park	8,105
Westoe	7,576
Whitburn and Marsden	7,355
Whiteleas	8,109
Total	151,133

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 General

The starting point for this study has been the guidance in Section 8 of the NPPF, which adheres to but has superseded PPG17. The policy gives clear recommendations for the protection of, and appropriate provision for, open space but does not provide any detailed guidance on how to conduct an open space assessment. It is therefore both logical and acceptable to reference the guidance for assessment provided in the former PPG17 and its Companion Guide. PPG17 placed a requirement on local authorities to undertake assessments and audits of open space, sports and recreational facilities in order to:

- identify the needs of the population;
- identify the potential for increased use; and,
- establish an effective strategy for open space/sports/recreational facilities at the local level.

The Companion Guide to PPG17 recommended an overall approach to this kind of study as summarised below:

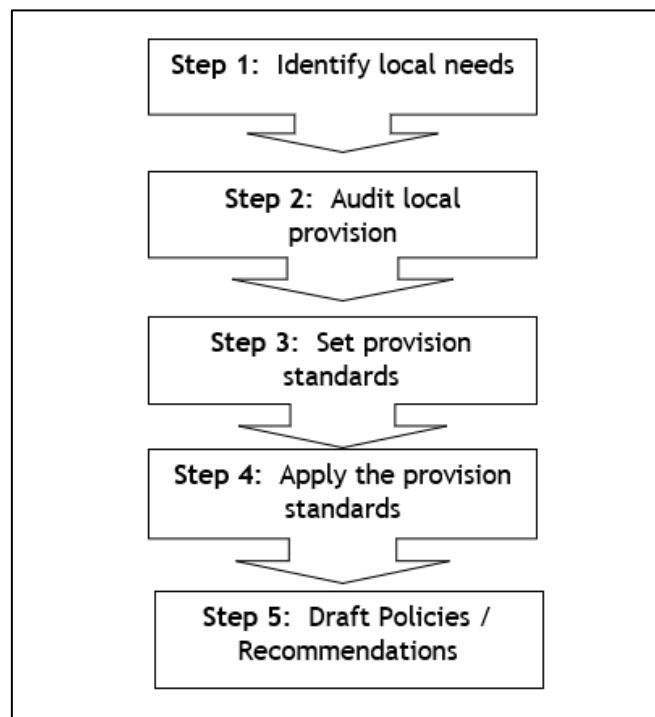


Figure 2 Summary of methodology

Within this overall approach the Companion Guide suggests a range of methods and techniques that might be adopted in helping the assessment process. Where appropriate, these methods and techniques have been employed within this study and are explained at the relevant point in the report. In addition, they are summarised in the paragraphs below.

2.2 Identifying Local Need (Step 1)

The Consultation Report (2023) examines identified local need for various types of open space and recreational opportunities. It has drawn upon a community needs survey as well as a detailed review of existing consultation data and other relevant documentation. The findings from the Stakeholder Consultation Report (2023) are summarised in this document.

2.3 Audit of Existing Open Space Assets (Step 2)

2.3.1 Defining the scope of the audit

In order to build up an accurate picture of the current open space and play provision in the borough, an initial desktop audit of the open space asset was carried out, which included:

- analysis of existing GIS data held by South Tyneside Council;
- desktop mapping of open space from aerial photography, the Ordnance Survey (OS) Greenspace layer and other open datasets e.g., from Natural England;
- liaison with council officers.

Following this, quality audits were undertaken by Ethos during October 2022 at a total of 181 sites. The quality audit drew on criteria set out in the 'Green Flag Award'³. The audits were undertaken using a standardised methodology and consistent approach; however, audits of this nature can only ever be a snapshot in time and their main purpose is to provide a consistent and objective assessment of a site's existing quality rather than a full asset audit. Clearly, local communities may have aspirations which are not identified in the quality audit, but it is hoped that these can be explored further outside of this study through site management plans and neighbourhood/parish plans as appropriate.

2.3.2 Approach to mapping

As part of the audit process, sites were mapped into their primary typologies using a multi-functional approach to mapping (explained in further detail in Section 5). Sites have been snapped to MasterMap topographic boundaries where possible to ensure an accurate and consistent approach to the mapping.

Key open spaces that cross the boundary of the borough or fall outside the borough have been identified and mapped in order to inform the access analysis (acknowledging cross-border use of open space), however only the part of the open space that falls within the borough is included within the quantity analysis.

Where open spaces cross ward boundaries, in order to calculate the quantity of open space by ward, these have been split using the ward boundary. This means that there is no double counting of the quantity of sites that fall in more than one ward.

³ <http://www.greenflagaward.org.uk/judges/judging-criteria>

It should be noted that the typologies mapping is as accurate as possible (as of November 2022) following cross checking with the councils' GIS layers; desktop mapping; site visits and liaison with council officers.

The open space provision tables (in Section 5) and resulting supply and access maps (Section 7) are based on the mapping of open space which was signed off by the Council in November 2022.

2.4 Set and Apply Provision Standards (Steps 3 and 4)

Local open space provision standards have been set for the borough (in agreement with the project team), with three components, embracing:

- quantity;
- accessibility; and
- quality.

Quantity

The GIS database and mapping has been used to assess the existing provision of open space across the borough. The existing levels of provision are considered alongside findings of previous studies, the local needs assessment and consideration of existing and national standards or benchmarks. The key to developing robust local quantity standards is that they are locally derived, based on evidence and most importantly, achievable. Typically, standards are expressed as hectares per 1,000 population. The recommended standards are then used to assess the supply of each type of open space across the borough.

Access

Evidence from previous studies, the needs assessment and consideration of national benchmarks are used to develop access standards for open space.

A series of maps assessing access for different typologies are presented in this report. The maps are intended to be indicative, and more detailed maps by ward are provided in Appendix 2. The maps show walk time buffers and straight line buffers, depending on the access standards set⁴.

Straight-line walking distances do not account for potential 'barriers', such as busy roads, rail lines, cul-de-sacs etc. So, the actual route walked (the pedestrian route) is generally further i.e., straight-line distances are around 60% of actual distances. The standard walk-time and straight-line/pedestrian route distances are illustrated in the table below as a guide.

⁴ Drive-time standards have not been proposed as these are normally only appropriate for strategic sites such as country parks and sports hub sites. Drive-time standards generally do not work well for analysing access to local facilities/open space, as they do not generally show where the gaps in access are.

Table 2 Standard walk-times and distances

Walk-time (minutes)	Pedestrian Route (metres)	Straight-line (metres)
1	100	60
2	160	96
3	240	144
4	320	192
5	400	240
6	480	288
7	560	336
8	640	384
9	720	432
10	800	480
11	880	528
12	960	576
13	1040	624
14	1120	672
15	1200	720
16	1280	768
17	1360	816
18	1440	864
19	1520	912
20	1600	960

Quality

Quality standards have been developed drawing on previous studies, national benchmarks and good practice, evidence from the needs assessment and the findings of the quality audits, which were based on Green Flag Award criteria.

The quality standards also include recommended policies to guide the provision of new open space through development in the future.

2.5 Drafting Policy Recommendations (Step 5)

This section outlines higher level strategic options which may be applicable at ward and borough wide level. The strategic options address five key areas:

1. Existing provision to be protected;
2. Existing provision to be enhanced;
3. Opportunities for re-location/re-designation of open space;
4. Identification of areas for new provision; and
5. Facilities that may be surplus to requirement.

In addition, information on developer contributions and the methodology for calculating costs for the provision and maintenance of open space is provided in Section 8.

3.0 CONTEXT

3.1 Introduction

This section sets out a brief review of the most relevant national, regional, and local policies, strategies, and legislation of relevance to the study which have been considered in developing the methodology and findings of the study. Policies and strategies are subject to regular change, therefore the summary provided in this section was correct at the time of writing. South Tyneside Council reserve the right to change and update this section as policies change.

It also provides important contextual information regarding health and deprivation.

The PPG17 companion guide identified the importance of understanding the implications of existing strategies on the study. Specifically, before initiating local consultation, there should be a review of existing national, regional, and local plans and strategies, and an assessment of the implementation and effectiveness of existing planning policies and provision standards.

3.2 Strategic Context

3.2.1 National Strategic Context

Tackling the climate and nature emergency

Climate change represents an urgent and potentially irreversible threat to human societies and the planet. In recognition of this, the overwhelming majority of countries around the world adopted the Paris Agreement in December 2015, the central aim of which includes pursuing efforts to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C. The **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Global Warming Report (2018)** provides the scientific evidence that global warming in excess of 1.5C above pre-industrial levels will undermine life support systems for humanity. It found that global net human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) would need to fall by about 45% from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching 'net zero' around 2050.

The State of Nature Report (Oct 2019) and **The Global Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Report (May 2019)** show the degradation and deterioration of natural environments and ecosystems which all life depends, the loss of biodiversity and a knock-on impact on human existence. Climate change, agricultural management, hydrological change, urbanisation, pollution, woodland management, and invasive non-native species as among the most significant of pressures on our wildlife.

The climate and nature emergency are inextricably linked. Biodiversity underpins healthy ecosystems that are able to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change, however climate change is driving declines in biodiversity, and the degradation of our ecosystems, which means we are less able to adapt to change.

The **UK government declaration of an environment and climate emergency** in May 2019 has put climate and the environment at the centre of government policy. The government has since made a legally binding commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 (through the Climate Change Act 2008, as amended in 2019), and has committed to planting 30,000 hectares of trees annually by 2025 (through the England Tree Strategy), helping to form part of the green recovery from Covid-19 and support the transition to net zero. In September 2020, the Prime Minister signed the Leaders Pledge for Nature, committing to protect 30% of the UK's land by 2030, to protect nature and boost biodiversity, as well as committing to prioritise a green recovery following the coronavirus pandemic.

The UK hosted the 26th **UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26)** in October-November 2021, where Nations adopted the Glasgow Climate Pact, aiming to turn the 2020s into a decade of climate action and support, with the aim of accelerating action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. **The UN Biodiversity Conference (Convention on Biological Diversity COP15)** is due to take place in December 2022. It will see the adoption of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, which provides a strategic vision and a global roadmap for the conservation, protection, restoration and sustainable management of biodiversity and ecosystems for the next decade.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. The NPPF must be adhered to in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

Within the NPPF, open space is defined 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 act as a visual amenity'.

The NPPF contains the following references that relate to green infrastructure and open spaces:

- **Para 7** - The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
 - **Para 98** - Access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.
 - **Para 99** - Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:
-

- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
 - b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
 - c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.
- **Para 100** - Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.
 - **Para 126** - The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.
 - **Para 153** - Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure.
 - **Para 174** - Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.
 - **Para 175** – Plans should take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.

This is supported by the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) website, which includes guidance on key areas such as Design. The National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code and Guidance Notes for Design Codes illustrate how well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring, and successful can be achieved in practice.

Green Infrastructure (GI)

The concept of GI is firmly embedded within the NPPF, which requires local planning authorities to set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure. It defines green infrastructure as ‘A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity’.

The study area has a wide range of existing green infrastructure assets such as open spaces, allotments, woodlands, street trees, fields, hedgerows, treelines, lakes, ponds, rivers, meadows, grassland, playing fields, footpaths, and cycleways.

GI takes many different forms and can be delivered at multiple scales. It provides multiple functions, which in turn provide significant environmental, social, and economic benefits (also known as ecosystem services). The key benefits provided by GI are set out in the table below.

Table 3 Benefits provided by GI

Environmental
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports and provides biodiversity (which underpins healthy and resilient ecosystems) and species movement/dispersal including through providing habitat, wildlife corridors and stepping-stones. • Provides climate change mitigation and adaptation e.g., through providing flood and soil erosion protection, carbon sequestration and storage, and urban cooling. • Improves air and water quality (pollution absorption and removal). • Enables food production and supports pollination. • Supports and creates attractive and sustainable places and landscapes i.e., quality placemaking and place keeping.
Social/health and wellbeing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides opportunities for outdoor recreation, exercise, play and access to nature. • Provides attractive and safe spaces for people to enjoy and improve social contacts – a key component of ‘liveable’ towns and cities where people want to live. • Supports the development of skills and capabilities. • Improves air and water quality, provides urban cooling and shade, reduces noise pollution. • Provides green active travel routes.
Economic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides attractive places to live and work, attracting inward investment and tourism. • Increased land and property values. • Supports sustainable homes and communities e.g., through providing local food and building materials, encouraging low carbon lifestyles e.g., through well connected and attractive walking and cycling routes. • Provides health and wellbeing benefits that result in avoided healthcare costs. • Provides local food, energy, and timber production. • Climate change mitigation and adaption.

Nature-based Solutions

The terms green infrastructure and nature-based solutions are overlapping and are often used interchangeably, with GI falling under the umbrella of nature-based solutions.

Nature-based solutions are defined as ‘*actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits*’⁵. They have huge potential to help cities and urban areas become more resilient to climate change, and benefit people’s health and the economy.

⁵ <https://www.iucn.org/our-work/nature-based-solutions>

Nature-based solutions tend to be focused on six key areas⁶:

- Urban trees – found in parks, gardens, and along streets, trees can help to regulate urban temperatures, reduce flood risk, and clean the air
- Parks and green spaces – natural or planted green spaces are used for recreation and exercise, as well as being rich habitats for wildlife
- Green buildings – walls and roofs covered with vegetation act like sound and heat insulation for buildings, and absorb rainwater, so reducing flood risk
- Riverbank vegetation – plants along riverbanks trap soil and sediment, improving water quality and reducing flood damage by slowing the flow of water
- Wetland and bioswales – natural wetlands and man-made bioswales (or ‘rain gardens’) help to purify water and reduce flooding
- Lakes and ponds – natural or artificial waterbodies in cities can hold water for irrigation or drinking, and support a wide range of wildlife.

Green Infrastructure Standards

Natural England’s **National Green Infrastructure Framework** was launched in January 2023 and establishes national standards (voluntary) for GI in England and comprises the following:

- GI Principles – underpin the framework and cover why, what and how to do good GI.
- GI Mapping Database and Analysis – a freely available tool providing GI Mapping layers and analyses.
- GI Standards (5 headline standards – GI Strategy Standards, Accessible Greenspace Standards, Urban Nature Recovery Standard, Urban Greening Factor Standard and Urban Tree Canopy Cover Standard).
- GI Planning and design guide (which complements existing guidance such as the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code).
- Process Journeys (to assist different audiences) are still to be published.

The Framework does not seek to duplicate existing standards such as Building with Nature, but rather to learn from best practice and reinforce key messages, such as that green infrastructure and natural capital needs to be considered and incorporated at the earliest stages of development and treated like other types of essential infrastructure.

Building with Nature is the UK’s first benchmark for GI. It provides a framework of robust and evidence-based quality standards which define what good looks like at each stage of the development process, so that developments deliver for the natural world and healthy communities. It can be used to guide physical development and also strategic planning policy documents, and there are accreditation options available for both physical developments and policy documents.

⁶ <https://earthwatch.org.uk/working-with-business/climate-proof-cities>

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (2022)

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (2022) provides a framework for levelling up to ensure all parts of the country share equally in the nation's success. This includes giving local communities control over what is built, where it is built, and what it looks like. Ensuring new development meets clear design standards which reflect community views (reflecting the recommendations in the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission⁷) is a key part of this, alongside a strengthened framework of environmental outcomes, and expanded protections for the places people value.

The 25 Year Environment Plan

This 25 Year Environment Plan (25 YEP) sets out government action to help the natural world regain and retain good health. It aims to deliver cleaner air and water in our cities and rural landscapes, protect threatened species and provide richer wildlife habitats. It calls for an approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing that puts the environment first.

The 25-year goals are:

1. Clean air.
2. Clean and plentiful water.
3. Thriving plants and wildlife.
4. A reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards such as flooding and drought.
5. Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently.
6. Enhanced beauty, heritage, and engagement with the natural environment.

Actions/policies are identified around six key areas: Using and managing land sustainably; Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes; Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing; Increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste; Securing clean, productive, and biologically diverse seas and oceans; Protecting and improving the global environment.

The Nature Recovery Network (NRN) is a key policy commitment in the 25 YEP. The NRN will benefit people and wildlife by increasing, improving and joining-up wildlife-rich places across England. It will create or restore 500,000 hectares of wildlife habitat outside protected sites, more effectively linking existing protected sites and landscapes, as well as urban green infrastructure (such as trees, hedgerows, parks, fields, forests) and urban blue infrastructure (such as rainwater tanks, bioswales, rivers, canals, ponds, wetlands, and floodplains). This landscape-scale approach to restoring nature was recently demonstrated by Natural England's recent designation of the Purbeck Heaths National Nature Reserve (NNR) in Dorset.

The **Environment Act (2021)** places the 25 Year Environment Plan on statutory footing. A key outcome from this includes a requirement for all areas in England to establish Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs). This will help bring a broad range of groups together – from farmers to businesses to local communities – to deliver priorities for nature recovery at a local and national level. Five local authorities (Cornwall, Buckinghamshire, Greater Manchester,

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/living-with-beauty-report-of-the-building-better-building-beautiful-commission>

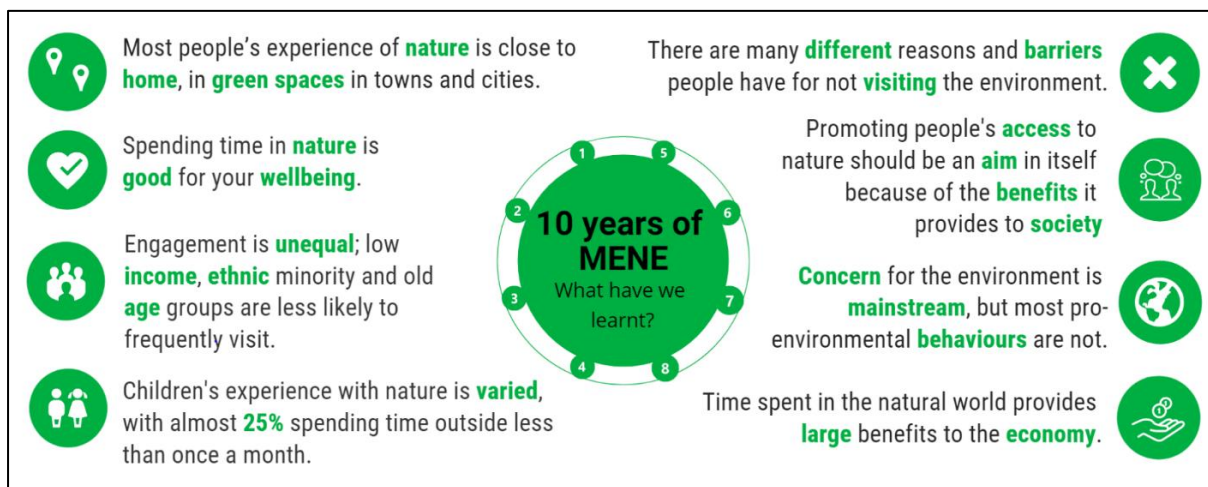
Northumberland, and Cumbria) have been selected to set up LNRs pilot studies to help map the most valuable sites and habitats for wildlife in their area and identify where nature can be restored. The pilots will also help kick-start the creation of over a million acres of habitats for wildlife.

The Environment Act (2021) will also require all development to achieve mandatory net gains in biodiversity. LPAs will be required to report on both biodiversity net gains and LNRs, however the mechanism for this has not yet been published by Central Government.

Covid 19 and the impact on open spaces and green infrastructure

The value of green infrastructure has also been keenly recognised during the COVID 19 pandemic where access to green space has played a key role in people's well-being; alongside a wider appreciation of nature.

From 2009 to 2019, Natural England ran the Monitor of Engagement of the Natural Environment (MENE) survey. It collected data about outdoor recreation, pro-environmental behaviours, attitudes towards and engagement with the natural environment. It was estimated there were 4 billion visits to the natural environment in 2019, up from 2.9 billion over 10 years. The survey highlights the importance of access to nature for our health and wellbeing, but also clear inequalities between different age, ethnic and socio-economic groups, and those with different states of health, in how they use and experience the natural environment.



MENE concluded in 2019 and has been superseded by The People and Nature Survey for England. This has also helped understand how adults and children in England have engaged with nature since the coronavirus pandemic.

The findings continue to demonstrate the importance of spending time in nature for people's wellbeing. During April 2020 (during lockdown restrictions) the survey polled 2000 people and key findings included:

- The survey also revealed that a smaller proportion of adults spent time outside in April 2020 than their reported average over 12 months, which suggests that lockdown restrictions impacted people using green spaces.

- The most regular visits to green spaces were to urban green spaces such as parks and playing fields (41%), followed by fields, farmland, and countryside (25%), woodland and forests (24%) and rivers, lakes, and canals (21%).
- 86% of adults with access to a private garden or allotment felt that these spaces are important to them.
- 89% of adults agreed or strongly agreed that green and natural spaces should be good places for mental health and wellbeing.
- 87% of adults agreed that 'being in nature makes me happy'.

The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP) The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (2011)

The White Paper recognises that a healthy natural environment is the foundation of sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing. It sets out how the value of nature can be mainstreamed across our society by facilitating local action; strengthening the connections between people and nature; creating a green economy and showing leadership in the European Union (EU) and internationally. It responds to the 2010 independent review of England's wildlife sites and ecological network, chaired by Professor Sir John Lawton, which identifies the need for more, better and bigger joined spaces for nature.

Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services, (August 2011)

This biodiversity strategy for England built on the Natural Environment White Paper and set out the strategic direction for national biodiversity policy to implement international and EU commitments. The vision for England is: 'By 2050 our land and seas will be rich in wildlife, our biodiversity will be valued, conserved, restored, managed sustainably and be more resilient and able to adapt to climate change, providing essential services and delivering benefits for everyone'.

The mission of this strategy was to 'halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people'.

The majority of the 2020 outcomes and indicators were not met. The UN Biodiversity Conference (Convention on Biological Diversity COP15) is due to take place in December 2022 and will see the adoption of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

Fields in Trust

Fields in Trust (FIT) is an independent charity with over 90 years' experience protecting parks and green spaces. They work with landowners, community groups and policy makers to champion the value of our parks and green spaces to achieve better protection for their future at both local and national level.

Fields in Trust works in partnership with landowners to protect land through a Deed of Dedication, a binding legal commitment with the landowner which secures spaces (usually a public park, playing field or recreation ground) in perpetuity for current and future generations to enjoy. Even if a space already has a form of protection (such as a covenant, or town and village green registration), a Deed of Dedication will strengthen the protection⁸.

The FIT report ‘Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play, Beyond the Six Acre Standard⁹ provides benchmark guidelines for practitioners on open space provision and design, which have been considered as part of the development of quantity, access and quality standards in Section 6 of this report.

FIT also conduct research into the benefits that local parks provide, such as the Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces Study (see below).

Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces - Measuring their economic and wellbeing value to individuals (Fields in Trust (FIT), 2018)

This report provides a robust economic valuation of parks and green spaces in the UK as well as valuing improvements in health and wellbeing associated with their frequent use. This is the first research study on parks and green spaces to use welfare weighting methodology, allowing for more informed evidence-based policy decisions. The headline figures are:

- **The Total Economic Value to an individual is £30.24 per year** (£2.52 per month), and includes benefits gained from using their local park or green space and non-use benefits such as the preservation of parks for future generations. The value of parks and green spaces is higher for individuals from lower socio-economic groups and from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. The findings show that any loss of parks and green spaces will disproportionately impact disadvantaged and underrepresented communities, precisely those who value them the most.
- **The Wellbeing Value associated with the frequent use of local parks and green spaces is worth £34.2 billion per year** to the entire UK adult population.
- **Parks and green spaces are estimated to save the NHS around £111 million per year** based solely on a reduction in GP visits and excluding any additional savings from prescribing or referrals.

Making Parks Count (The Parks Alliance (TPA), 2020)

This report makes the business case for parks, why they matter, and why they are a ‘smart investment’. It illustrates how parks in England deliver over £6.6bn of health, climate change and environmental benefits each year including £2.2bn in avoided health costs alone and worth £140 per year for each urban resident. For every £1 spent on parks in England an estimated £7 in additional value for health and wellbeing and the environment is generated. Some of the other key figures referenced in the report are:

- Urban green spaces raise house prices by an average of £2,500;

⁸ <https://www.fieldsintrust.org/what-is-protection>

⁹ <https://www.fieldsintrust.org/Upload/file/guidance/Guidance-for-Outdoor-Sport-and-Play-England.pdf>

- London’s parks alone help avoid an estimated £370m of mental health related costs each year;
- Parks are among the most species rich types of urban green spaces, and over 1,500 species of UK’s pollinators deliver an estimated £680m in value to the economy;
- The benefits of air pollutant removal by trees in public parks in England is estimated at £60m per year;
- The value of carbon sequestration by trees in public parks in England is estimated at £9m per year;
- Parks in England provide an urban cooling benefit of £4.8m per year.

Sport England Strategy – ‘Uniting the movement: A 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity’.

The Uniting the Movement Strategy by Sport England is a 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity. It sets out how the sector needs to change to give people opportunities now and, in the future, to allow people to live happier, healthier, and more fulfilled lives. This includes tackling inequalities seen in sport and physical activity and helping to remove barriers. The three objectives for the strategy are:

1. Advocating for movement, sport, and physical activity.
2. Joining forces on five big issues: recover and reinvent; connecting communities; positive experience for children and young people; connecting with health and wellbeing and active environments.
3. Creating the catalysts for change.

Yearly implementation plans will ensure that Sport England are investing most in those that need it the most with the right blend of national and local action and keeping the plan simple providing information and guidance to support colleagues and partners.

Environment Agency National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy (2020)

The Environment Agency’s Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy provides a framework for guiding the operational activities and decision making of practitioners supporting the direction set by government policy to protect people and places. It seeks to better manage the risk and consequences of flooding from rivers, the sea, groundwater, reservoirs, ordinary watercourses, surface water, sewers, and coastal erosion.

The strategy sets out the long-term delivery objectives the nation should take for the next 10 to 30 years as well as practical measures risk management authorities should take working with partners and communities. It has a vision for *‘a nation ready for, and resilient to, flooding and coastal changes – today, tomorrow and to the year 2100’*. To achieve this vision the strategy has three long-term ambitions:

1. **Climate resilient places** – working with partners to improve resilience to flooding and coastal change both now and in the face of climate change. This includes using nature-

based solutions and working with landowners to adapt practices to become more resilient.

2. **Today's growth and infrastructure resilient in tomorrow's climate** – making the right investment and planning decisions to secure sustainable growth and environmental improvements as well as providing resilience to change. This includes contributing to environmental net gain for new development proposals and putting a focus on providing planning advice that helps avoid inappropriate development in areas of risk.
3. **A nation ready to respond and adapt to flooding and coastal change** – ensuring local people understand their risk to flooding and coastal change and know their responsibilities and how to take action. This includes supporting communities to prepare and respond to flooding and coastal change by ensuring they have the skills and capabilities to adapt.

3.2.2 Regional Context

North East Strategic Economic Plan

The North East Strategic Economic Plan sets the plan to grow and develop the region's economy to become a more productive, inclusive, and sustainable regional economy. The ambition is to increase the number of jobs in the North East by 100,000 between 2014 and 2024.

The four areas where there is strong opportunity for growth are within the digital, health and life sciences, advanced manufacturing, and energy sectors. Within this the report sets out five programmes of delivery that set out initiative and projects to deliver the ambitions of this plan:

1. **Business Growth** – more businesses to seek the support and finance they need to grow and strengthen.
 2. **Skills, employment, inclusion, and progression** – all individuals to understand the employment opportunities and how to access these with employers having strong links with education and training providers.
 3. **Investment and Infrastructure** – develop a North East investment pipeline of projects working with partners to develop the pace and scale of investment.
 4. **Innovation** – increase the number of innovation active businesses by 550 and increase investment in business research, development, and innovation.
 5. **Transport connectivity** – ambition to have improved, greener, and more sustainable transport options to create a modern, integrated and transport system to underpin the economic ambitions.
-

North East COVID Economic Response: Our work so far and next steps

This economic response was a collaboration between the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), North East and North of Tyne Combined Authorities, the CBI, North East Joint Transport Committee and regional universities. This is to ensure that there is a shared understanding to be able to respond together to the economic impact of COVID-19 on the North East economy. The response sets out a three-phase approach; release from lockdown, living with COVID-19 and recovery/long term.

The North East England Nature Partnership (NEENP)

The NEENP remit is to embed the value of natural heritage into local decision making and work to improve ecological networks at a landscape-scale. It works with a diversity of organisations to plan and deliver strategic action enabling the recognition of the value of the natural environment in social and economic as well as environmental terms. It identifies opportunities to deliver improvements to natural heritage that are integrated with the enhancement of local communities and support economic success.

The NEENP launched a 20 Year Vision for Environmental Growth, setting out opportunities to deliver improvements to the natural environment that are integrated with the enhancement of local communities and support economic success. The vision is:

‘A thriving natural environment providing for a healthier and wealthier North East England’.

The vision reinforces that we must work with other sectors to ensure the many benefits of living in a nature rich environment brings and we have endeavoured to achieve this through our work themes. To achieve this vision, the plan focusses on four sections with a list of actions:

<p><u>Landscapes and Nature</u> Increase biodiversity resource by restoring the natural environment at a landscape scale.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a suite of landscape action plans. • Ensure enhance green and blue infrastructure planning across the North East. • Work strategically to create a landscape scale project pipeline. • Support landowners and farmers to adopt and implement wildlife friendly management methods. 	<p><u>Economy with Ecology</u> Achieve economic growth that is environmentally sustainable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively engage local organisations to reduce resource use and impact of business activities on the environment. • Champion the region’s natural assets in attracting and retaining investment. • Sustainably develop the region’s economic strength of natural assets. • Become the first region to adopt natural capital accounting.
<p><u>Learning Naturally</u> Every child to maximise their creativity, academic performance and healthy development.</p>	<p><u>Naturally Healthy</u> For communities to have regular access and exposure to biodiverse landscape to enhance health and wellbeing, give children the best start in life and reduce costs of long-term conditions and social care.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support educators to identify local need and opportunities for children and young people to experience naturalized play and learning. • Provide support to schools for children to access more nature based outdoor learning. • Work with local businesses to innovatively help towards costs of providing outdoor learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the case for the benefits derived from making space for nature across the life course. • Work to ensure everyone has access to a good quality natural environment. • Support the expansion of nature based social prescribing.
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North East Transport Plan (2021-2035)

This is the first region-wide Transport Plan for the seven local authority areas in the North East and sets out the transport priorities up to 2035.

The North East Transport Plan vision is: ‘Moving to a green, healthy, dynamic and thriving North East’.

The objectives of the Transport Plan are:

- Carbon-neutral transport
- Overcome inequality and grow our economy
- Healthier North East
- Appealing sustainable transport choices
- Safe, secure network.

It sets out a delivery plan to achieve the vision and objectives, which ranges from shovel-ready schemes to those beyond 10 years.

3.2.3 Local Context

The South Tyneside Vision (2023 – 2043) and Council Strategy (2023- 2026)

The South Tyneside 20 year vision (2023-2043) is ‘Our South Tyneside – A place where people live healthy, happy, and fulfilled lives’. The Council have set out five ambitions which will help deliver the ambition and guide everything the council does. These are:

We want all people in South Tyneside to be:

- Financially secure - Residents will be financially secure. They will have what they need for a good standard of living.
- Healthy and well - Residents will enjoy good mental wellbeing and physical health throughout their lives. They will have the best start in life and be able to live and age well.
- Connected to jobs - Residents will have access to good quality jobs, skills, and learning. They will have the skills and confidence to apply for a wide range of quality local jobs.

These jobs will be in key and growing areas of employment and will benefit all of our borough.

- Part of strong communities - Residents will live in clean, green, and connected communities where they feel safe.

And we are committed to:

- Targeting support to make things faster - We will target support at the residents and parts of our borough that need it the most, reducing inequalities and making things fairer.

For each of the five ambitions, the council have identified some clear priorities and a detailed action plan to guide delivery over the next three years (The Council Strategy 2023- 2026), working with residents and partners. These include enabling and inspiring residents to live healthier lives, including through promoting more walking and cycling; supporting green and sustainable choices and behaviours and connection to the natural environment; and enhancing satisfaction in the local area by supporting clean and safe neighbourhoods and public spaces.

Emerging Draft Local Plan (2022)

South Tyneside Council has produced a draft local plan which sets out the vision and objectives for growth of the borough.

Key objectives include promoting healthy communities, meeting the challenges of climate change, conserving and enhancing the natural environment and historic environment, building a strong and competitive economy, well designed places and ensuring the vitality of centres.

Consultation on the draft local plan (Regulation 18) ran from June – August 2022, which will inform the preparation of the final draft.

South Tyneside Core Strategy (2007)

The Core Strategy lies at the heart of the Local Development Framework and sets out the overall direction for the plan. The spatial vision for the plan is *'concentrating development on our key regeneration/development areas but ensuring this is not at the expense of maintaining communities and providing full access to the major facilities and developments'*.

Open space protection, enhancement and provision underpins many of the spatial objectives including; reducing the causes and impacts of climate change, improving air quality, protecting and enhancing biodiversity, protecting and enhancing the quality and distinctiveness of land and landscapes, improving health and reducing health inequalities, and strengthening community cohesion.

There are a number of policies which relate to open space (for example, Policy EA1 Local Character and Distinctiveness), but the main policy of relevance to this open space assessment is Policy SC6: Providing for Recreational Open Space, Sport and Leisure, which promotes the provision of high quality recreational open space, playing fields and other sporting and play facilities. It also refers to more detailed guidance on open space standards to be provided in Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). SPD 3 provides further guidance.

South Tyneside Supplementary Planning Document 3: Green Infrastructure (2012)

The Green Infrastructure SPD expands on the Core Policy Strategy Policy SC6 ‘Providing for Recreational Open Space, Sport and Leisure’ and the Development Management Policy DM7 ‘Local Biodiversity and Geodiversity Sites’ by providing an analysis of existing green infrastructure within the borough and setting out the vision for future improvement and provision. The SPD aligns with the South Tyneside vision by delivering the healthier people objective and a clean and green environment with better housing and neighbourhoods.

The vision for the SPD is that green infrastructure will contribute to the sustainability of South Tyneside and promote a high quality of life for future generations, by mitigating impacts of climate change and flooding whilst playing an important role in regeneration and helping to create good quality and healthy sustainable communities where people choose to live. It will also protect and enhance the natural and built environment and promote biodiversity. The vision is delivered through five strategic themes:

1. Climate change and Water Quality
2. Accessibility and Sustainable Transport
3. Quality of Place – Regeneration and Tourism
4. Recreation, Open Spaces and Health
5. Biodiversity and Landscape

The SPD provides minimum standards for open space, as summarised in the table below. These standards were informed by the 2009 Open Space Strategy and have not been used by the Council in some time due to the publication of the 2015 Open Space Study (and 2019 Addendum) (see below).

Table 4 Open Space Standards set out within SPD3: Green Infrastructure (2012)

Green Infrastructure Type	Hierarchy	Quantity (ha/1000)	Quality	Accessibility
Parks and Open Space	All	2.92	Good	-
	District (30+ha)	1.08	Excellent	Within 3000m
	Neighbourhood (10-30ha)	0.46	Good	Within 800m
	Local 0.2-10ha)	1.44	Good	Within 400m
Allotments	All	0.4	Good	Within 800m
	Community/	0.23	Good	Within 400m

Provision for Children and Young People	Neighbourhood			
	Local			Within 100m
Provision of Formal Outdoor Sports Facilities	Playing Pitch	0.53	Good	Within 1000m
	Bowls Provision	0.02		
	Tennis Provision	0.02		
	All Outdoor Sports Provision	1.64		
	All Outdoor Sports Facilities (excluding golf)	0.78		
Cemeteries and Crematoria	All	-	Excellent	-
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace	All	2.89	Average	-
	District			Within 5000m
	Neighbourhood			Within 2000m
	Local			Within 300m
	Local Nature Reserves			

Each theme has a series of actions, which are as follows:

Table 5 Actions set out within SPD3: Green Infrastructure (2012)

Theme	Action
Climate change and Water Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the amount of SUDs. • Increase areas of natural woodland. • Ensure developments promote sustainability and environmental benefits. • Implementing and Sandhaven Beach Dune Management. • Seek to reduce coastal erosion and flooding.
Accessibility and Sustainable Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address missing PROW links. • Improvements to cycle network. • Improve connectivity and safety of the cycle network. • Work with partners to deliver recreational route improvements. • Create long-distance coastal walking route.
Quality of Place – Regeneration and Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploit green infrastructure tourism potential. • Promote cycle tourism. • Riverside Accessibility. • Improve links to neighbouring local authorities. • Investment in quality of place.
Recreation, Open Spaces and Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve allotment provision. • Maintain good quality parks and open spaces. • Ensure playing pitchy and open space provision meets the needs of the community.
Biodiversity and Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of council land to improve biodiversity. • Street trees and hedgerows. • Protect and enhance LWS and wildlife corridors. • Increase provision of LNRs.

The strategy also identifies four strategic corridors to be protected and enhanced, these are:

- River Corridors – Rivers Tyne and Don and associated tributaries
- Coastal Corridor
- Green Belt Corridor
- Railway Mineral Lines

South Tyneside Open Space Study (2015)

The 2015 open space assessment replaced the previous 2009 open space strategy. The study followed the Companion Guide to PPG17 and assessed the provision, access and quality of open space. It considered the supply and demand for provision based upon population distribution, planned growth and consultation findings. The open space typologies considered were parks and gardens, natural/semi-natural greenspace, amenity greenspace, provision for children/young people, allotments, cemeteries/churchyards, civic space and formal outdoor sport.

The assessment analysed open space based on three analysis areas (Hebburn and Jarrow, Inner and Outer South Shields and South (Villages and Green Belt)), reflecting the geographic and demographic nature of each area.

The study identified 230 open spaces within South Tyneside which was equivalent to 868ha across the district. 58% of sites scored above the threshold for quality¹⁰. Play spaces and amenity greenspaces mostly scored above the quality threshold than other typologies. It was found that parks and with natural/semi-natural greenspaces had fewer sites scoring above the quality threshold.

It sets the following standards¹¹. The access standards were based on best practice guidance and informed by consultation, and the quantity standards were based on existing levels of provision.

Table 6 Open space standards set out within South Tyneside Open Space Study (2015)

Typology	Quantity Standard	Access Standard
Parks and gardens	0.68 ha/1000	10-minute walk time (800m) 30-minute drive time
Natural and semi-natural	3.29 ha/1000	15-minute walk time (1200m) 30-minute drive time
Amenity greenspace	1.20 ha/1000	5-minute walk time (400m)
Provision for children and young people	0.04 ha/1000	10 minute walk time (800m)
Allotments	0.28 ha/1000	15-minute walk time (1200m)

¹⁰ Quality threshold percentages are set by typology.

¹¹ It appears that the quantity standards are purely based on existing levels of provision and are referred to as 'current standards'.

South Tyneside Open Space Addendum (2019)

The 2019 open space addendum updated the previous 2015 open space study to reflect changes in open space provision as a result of site allocations. The addendum sets out the known changes in open space provision, recalculates provisions standards, scenario testing to ascertain the implications of the potential loss of open space as a result of future site allocations and assesses future needs up to 2035.

Changes highlighted by the addendum include:

- There was a small increase in natural and semi-natural greenspace and allotments and a small reduction in provision of amenity greenspace.¹²
- 18 open spaces were identified as being allocated in the emerging Local Plan. If these allocations proceeded, there would be a loss in provision in parks and gardens, natural and semi-natural greenspace, amenity greenspace and children and young people.
- Despite the loss in provision, most areas of South Tyneside would still be within access of an open spaces site (either parks, amenity greenspace or natural greenspace).
- Based on future population projections, greater amounts of open space provision are required in the future if the existing standards are used.

Table 7 Open Space Standards set out within South Tyneside Open Space Addendum (2019)

Typology	Current Standard (2018)
Parks and gardens	0.68 ha/1000
Natural and semi-natural	3.28 ha/1000
Amenity greenspace	1.19 ha/1000
Provision for children and young people	0.04 ha/1000
Allotments	0.29 ha/1000

South Tyneside Wildlife Corridor Review (2020)

The Wildlife Corridor review updates the mapping of the wildlife corridors networks in South Tyneside to fall in line with national planning policy and the Nature Networks Evidence Handbook (2020). The updated network is built on a hierarchy of components according to their biodiversity importance and priority. ‘Core sites’ are highest ranked and consist of designated sites and priority habitats, followed by ‘secondary features’ consisting of semi-natural greenspaces and linear corridors, then ‘stepping stones’ consisting of habitat patches and features that support species movement across the landscape and finally ‘buffers zones’.

South Tyneside Flood and Coastal Risk Management Strategy (2017)

The South Tyneside Flood and Coastal Risk Management Strategy aims to adopt a new approach to flood risk management which involves improving communication and partnership working to protect the public and the South Tyneside economy from immediate

¹² Although this does not always reflect in the ‘current standards’ (see Table 7) due to the use of more up to date population figures – ONS 2017 Mid-Year Estimates.

and future risks. The strategy outlines how to support areas previously affected by flooding and protecting areas at future risk based on modelling.

A programme of local actions spanning over a 5-year period are outlined to meet the challenges of managing flood and coastal erosion risk within catchments and along the coast along with balancing the needs of the community, the economy, and the environment.

In terms of open space, within the action plan it highlights the need to review open spaces to consider where practical flood risk management measures can be included such as swales, storage, ponds/wetlands. SUDs are also emphasised as a key approach to flood risk management, and these have already been implemented in some open spaces within South Tyneside.

Sustainable South Tyneside 2020-2025 - Moving towards a carbon neutral future (2020)

South Tyneside Council published this five year strategy in response to its climate emergency pledge to becoming carbon neutral by 2030. The strategy focuses on climate change mitigation; focusing on actions to reduce carbon emissions and climate change adaptation; establishing steps to prepare and adapt for future changes in climate. It brings a range of plans and strategic actions across the Council into one document with a focus on establishing a 5 year-action plan.

Through consultation and engagement along with research and data gathering, the strategy provides 11 key delivery themes: Reducing emissions from council buildings; street lighting; transportation and staff travel; environment and biodiversity; schools; South Tyneside Homes operations; procurement; policy; adaptation; cultural change and awareness; and championing a carbon neutral future.

In regard to open space, under the environment and biodiversity theme there are delivery objectives and actions, which are as follows:

Delivery objective 1 – South Tyneside will have a natural, healthy, thriving, and resilient environment that makes a positive contribution to carbon capture and storage, offsetting harmful emissions

- Plant at least 3,000 trees per year.
 - Encourage residents to become actively involved in tree planting.
 - Introduce sensor lighting across parks and green spaces.
 - Enhance planting and hedgerow planting.
 - Investigate habitats that sequester carbon and establish way to manage land differently to reduce emissions and increase carbon capture.
 - Investigate opportunities for green walls and roofs.
-

Delivery objective 2 – Manage appropriate areas of South Tyneside Council’s land to maximise biodiversity and bio abundance, creating a wildlife rich Borough where species can more readily adapt to climate change pressures

- Seek opportunities to enhance existing hedgerows and plant new ones.
- Investigate opportunities to improve wildlife value of existing green spaces, allotments, community and public gardens.
- Review and implements actions to ensure natural habitats can capture carbon.
- Map existing wildlife corridors which will in turn identify where habitats could be create or improved.
- Investigate opportunities that help improve and encourage biodiversity and wildlife.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan 2021 – 2036

The local cycling and walking infrastructure plan outlines how South Tyneside Council aims to create active travel within the borough. The plan reviews user groups and their needs, then determines a series of projects to improve cycling and walking, these include:

- Developing new and connected active travel routes within and across the boundaries of South Tyneside;
- Developing sustainable transport as a viable transport mode of everyday journeys;
- Applying best practice to the management of infrastructure;
- Delivering new infrastructure appropriate to new and future residents and;
- Promoting sustainable travel with public health colleagues.

The plan hopes that it will create a visible impact on the active travel network alongside local transport and planning policies to create a greener, healthier, and more accessible South Tyneside.

Air Quality Status Report (2021)

The air quality status report (2021) reports on the quality of the air and sets out a series of actions to improve air quality for the health and wellbeing of residents. Since the 2019 Clean Air Strategy the council has completed transports improvements to improve air quality, reduce congestion and promote public transport which includes significant A roads and junctions and active travel corridors.

The monitoring data from 2020 showed a decrease in annual mean concentrations at all monitoring stations. However, this is likely to be due to the COVID-19 pandemic where restrictions were put in place ordering people to stay at home leading to less traffic and changing travel patterns. Currently, South Tyneside Council is meeting local air quality objectives for both NO² and PM₁₀.

Over the next 5 years the council plans to implement further improvement schemes including healthier/safer metro stations, new bus corridors, transport corridors and electric charging points.

Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS, 2019)

The South Tyneside Council PPS, which is currently being updated, provides a strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing outdoor sports pitches and ancillary facilities between 2019 and 2035. It covers the following playing pitches and outdoor sports: football, cricket, rugby union and league, hockey/artificial grass pitches, tennis bowls and athletics.

The vision for the PPS is “To provide a range of high quality facilities for the provision of playing pitch sports to encourage participation and enable South Tyneside to meet current and future needs.”

The existing position for all pitch sports is either demand is being met or there is a shortfall, whereas the future position shows the exacerbation of current shortfalls and additional shortfalls in some areas and for some sports. Only hockey is without any current or future shortfalls, although it remains imperative that the current number of hockey suitable AGPs used for hockey are protected and that security of tenure and quality is improved.

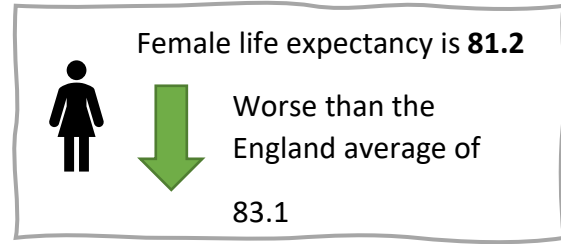
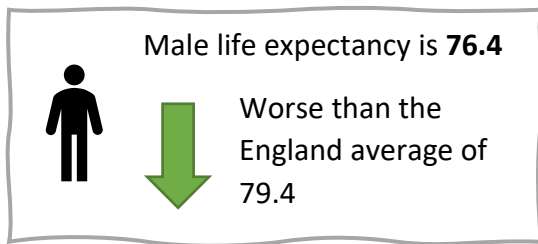
In terms of non-pitch sports, supply meets current demand for tennis, bowls and athletics. Although there is sufficient current and future capacity for athletics demand to be met, there is a future need to improve track quality at Monkton Stadium. There is also potential unmet demand to bring tennis courts back into use at West Park, Jarrow.

3.3 Health and Deprivation Context

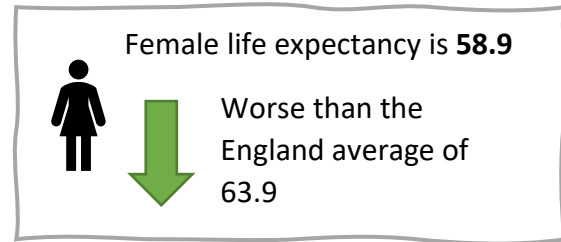
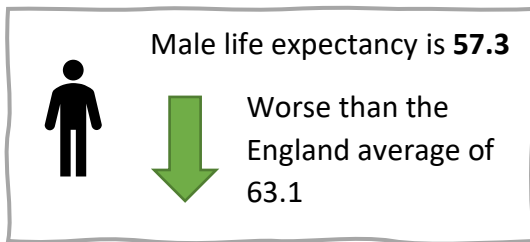
3.3.1 Health summary

Public Health England publish a number of indicators which can provide a summary of the health context of South Tyneside.

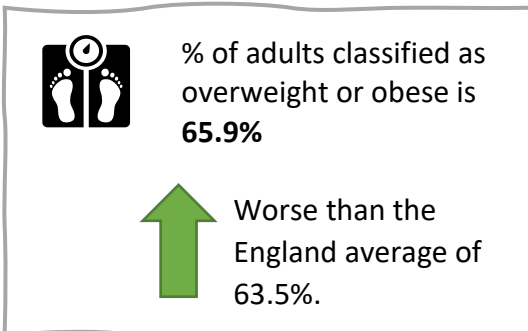
Life Expectancy¹³



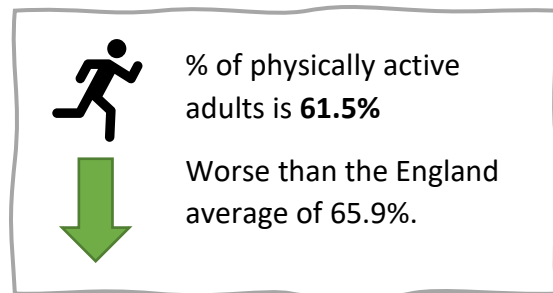
Healthy Life Expectancy¹⁴



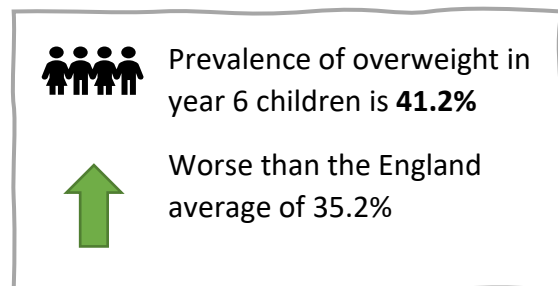
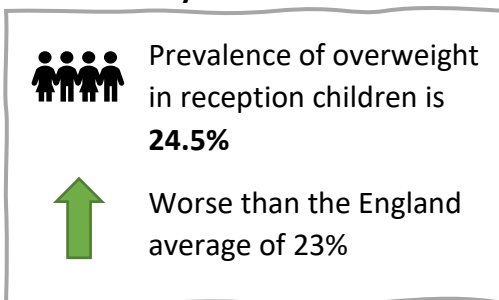
Adult Obesity¹⁵



Adult Physical Activity¹⁶



Child Obesity¹⁷



¹³ PHE life expectancy at birth 3-year-range (2018-20)

¹⁴ PHE healthy life expectancy at birth 3-year-range (2018-20)

¹⁵ PHE percentage of adults (aged 18+) classified as overweight or obese (2020/21)

¹⁶ PHE percentage of physically active adults (2020/21)

¹⁷ PHE prevalence of overweight (including obesity) (2021/22).

3.3.2 Health Policy

South Tyneside Physical Activity Strategy 2019 -2022 (2019)

Public Health England has provided evidence to show that an active life is essential for physical and mental health and wellbeing which is why the strategy is key for improving the health and wellbeing of South Tyneside. Estimates indicate that physical inactivity costs South Tyneside over £4,000,000 annually in healthcare costs. There is, however, a range of assets available can provide opportunities for increasing physical activity levels such as leisure services, parks & green spaces, sporting facilities and private & community groups.

The strategy sets out a number of high-level priorities which include:

- Plan and implement a strategy to provide a strategic and systematic approach to increasing physical activity.
- Develop a physical activity offer with an emphasis on walking and cycling. Take a coordinated approach to promoting these opportunities.
- Increase participation in a large-scale media campaign locally.
- Develop a facility that bring together the physical activity opportunities available throughout South Tyneside in one easy to access location.

The Physical Activity Strategy will be reviewed and refreshed in 2023/24.

Mental Health Strategy 2022 – 2026

The South Tyneside Mental Health Strategy sets out the priorities for South Tyneside to ensure a resilient offer that recognises that mental health is everyone's business as well as the significant impact that Covid-19 has had on everyone's mental wellbeing. The strategy address's the wider factors that affect mental health, improving services and by focusing on prevention so that South Tyneside achieves the vision of being a mentally healthy borough for everyone. Open space is highlighted as one of the strengths of South Tyneside with beaches and parks creating a thriving environment which contributes to a sense of wellbeing.

The strategy highlights the health inequalities that have been outlined as the start of this section 2.3 and therefore outlines three areas for improvement which are:

1. Reduce mental health inequalities.
2. Improve children and young people's mental health.
3. Improve flexibility, integration, and compassionate response of services.

Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2021/22

The annual public health report highlights views from people living and working in South Tyneside during the pandemic, and how services were adopted and delivered. The pandemic heightened the 12-year life expectancy gap and 18-year healthy life expectancy gap that can be seen between the most affluent and most deprived wards in the district.

Recommendations from the report build on the previous 2020 annual report and focus on the post-covid recovery period and include:

- **Policy** - supporting the development of a lobbying plan to influence decision makers on the need for fair funding to tackle entrenched inequalities.
- **Health protection specific** – develop a stand-up plan for COVID and other potential pandemic respiratory illnesses and continue to monitor the long-term and direct impact of COVID.
- **Staff** – continue to maintain the high-level of resilience across the workforce.
- **Service development** – invest in skills, continues public involvement and community investment, and embed pragmatic research.

In terms of open space, the recommendations focus on empowering communities to take pride in South Tyneside to explore opportunities to grow food and develop green spaces.

Joint Strategic Needs and Asset Assessment (JSNAA)

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment¹⁸ identifies the current and future health and wellbeing needs in South Tyneside. It provides partners with the information to agree priorities and deliver services that meet the needs in the area.

Topics include populations, vulnerable groups, illness and death, behaviour and lifestyle and wider issues. In terms of open space, the physical activity topic highlights the opportunity that open spaces provide for formal and informal physical activity and that should town and transport planners should consider incorporating these into developments to encourage people to be active.

South Tyneside Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2022)

The Strategy is a high-level plan to address the biggest health and wellbeing challenges facing the borough. Responsibility for development and delivery of the Strategy rests with the South Tyneside Health and Wellbeing Board which is a statutory forum bringing together local leaders from across health and social care. The vision is ‘Work in partnership to improve the health, wellbeing and quality of life for children, adults and families and reduce health inequalities, to help people live longer and healthier lives’. To achieve this the Strategy commits to achieving the following outcomes with the population:

- Giving every Child and Young Person the Best Start.
- Financial security to lead healthy, fulfilling lives.
- Good mental well-being and social connectivity across the life course.
- Safe and healthy places to live, learn, and work.

¹⁸ The JSNAA can be viewed at <https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/8598/Overview>

3.3.3 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

The Indices of Deprivation 2019 provide a set of relative measures of deprivation for small areas (Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs)) across England, based on seven different domains of deprivation:

- Income Deprivation
- Employment Deprivation
- Education, Skills, and Training Deprivation
- Health Deprivation and Disability
- Crime
- Barriers to Housing and Services
- Living Environment Deprivation

Each of these domains is based on a basket of indicators. As far as is possible, each indicator is based on data from the most recent time point available.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation combines information from the seven domains to produce an overall relative measure of deprivation.

Figure 3 below shows the IMD rank for each LSOA within the study area, where 1 is most deprived and 10 is least deprived. As can be seen, there are large inequalities within the study area, with the highest levels of deprivation in the north and central areas of the borough. South Tyneside was ranked 27th most deprived out of 317 local authorities nationally in the 2019 English Index of Multiple Deprivation. The Borough is more deprived than its Tyne and Wear neighbours and is the 3rd most deprived Borough in the North East region.

A Public Health England report¹⁹ highlights that improving access to quality green space has the potential to improve health outcomes for the whole population, in a number of ways:

- Promoting health behaviour including encouraging physical activity and active travel;
- Improving social contacts and giving people a sense of familiarity and belonging;
- Supporting the development of skills and capabilities; and
- Mediating potential harms posed by the local environment for example air pollution, heat, noise and flood risk.

This is particularly true for disadvantaged communities, where the evidence suggests that people's health and wellbeing is enhanced by living in a greener environment. This means that green space also can be an important tool in the ambition to increase healthy life expectancy and narrow the gap between the life chances of the richest and poorest in society.

¹⁹ Public Health England Report - [Improving access to greenspace: a new review for 2020](#)

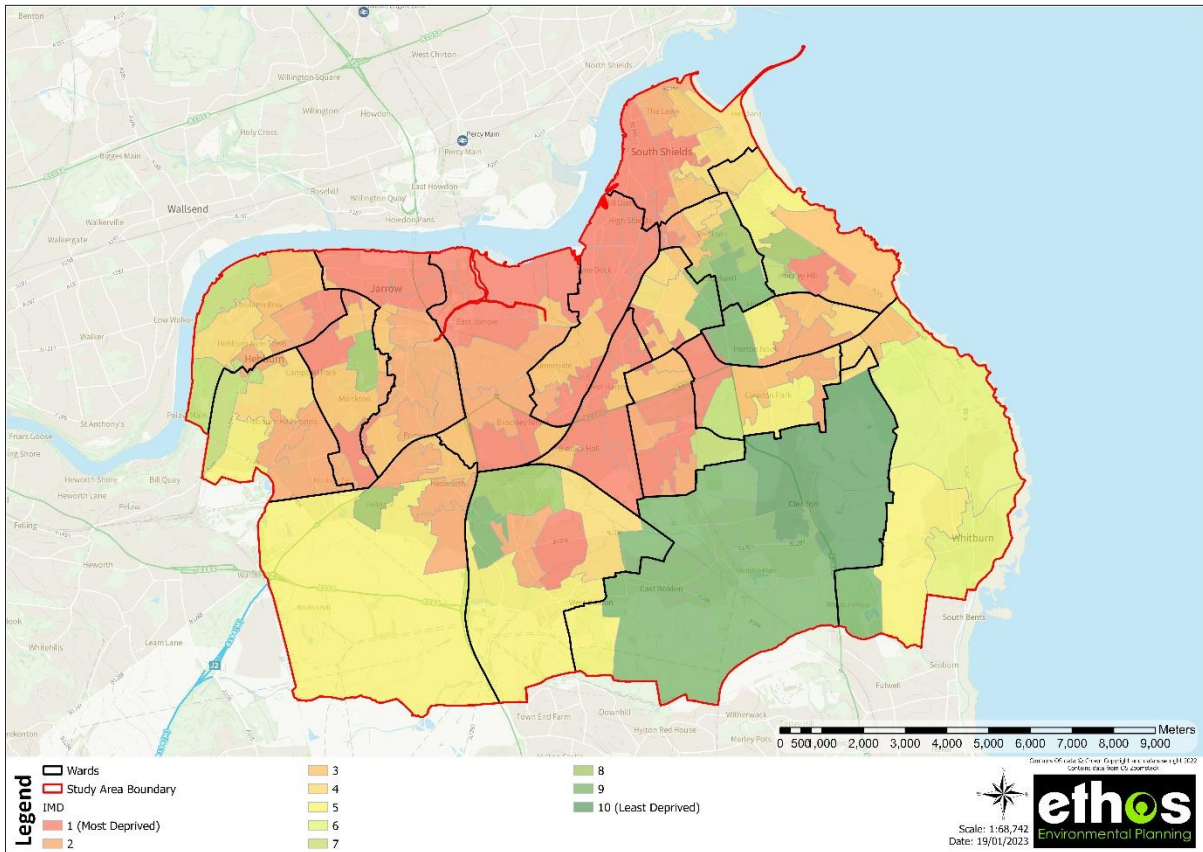


Figure 3 IMD ranks in the study area (by LSOA)

4.0 LOCAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT (STEP 1)

4.1 Introduction

The consultation report (2022) examines local needs for a wide range of different types of open space and recreation facilities. It provides consultation findings from public consultation and previous consultation findings from other strategies. The work was undertaken from October to November 2022.

The consultation undertaken looked at the adequacy of current provision in terms of the quantity, quality, and access. The results of this consultation and other analyses have helped (amongst other aspects) to inform the content of the recommended local standards (section 6 of this report). It has also helped the study to understand the communities wider appreciated and values attached to open space and recreation facilities.

This section summaries the key findings from the consultation report (2022) in relation to open space under the following headings:

1. Community Consultation
2. Public Health

4.2 Community Consultation – Key Findings

This provides some key consultation findings from the online community survey, which was promoted by the Council's Communications Team through their website and social media platforms during October 2022. A total of 362 surveys were completed, representing 963 people.

Quantity

- For all kinds of open spaces/recreation facilities respondents thought that there was a need for quantity of provision.
- A large majority thought that there was a particular need for more woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves (74%), informal open spaces (66%) and facilities for teenagers (62%).
- Types of open spaces where respondents thought that there were enough facilities include parks and recreation grounds (38%) and water recreation facilities (38%).

Quality

- Quality of open spaces were seen as varied in how they were rated with 'adequate' and 'good' being used as the most common rating.
-

- Beaches were rated the most highly in terms of quality with 85% of respondents either rating them as good or very good followed by parks and recreation grounds (52%).
- Households highlighted the overall quality of outdoor facilities for teenagers as being either poor or very poor by 44% and 29% for multi-use games areas.

Access

In general, a majority of household respondents report that they would not normally travel more than 15 minutes to visit the different kinds of open spaces and recreation facilities. There is considerable variation however between the typologies. For example:

- 64% of households are prepared to travel 20 minutes to visit the study area's beaches with 36% being prepared to travel further. 64% would also travel similar lengths of time to travel to woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves.
- 50% of households would expect children's play areas to be within a 10-minute travel time, of which 21% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.
- 49% of households would also expect informal open spaces to be within a 10-minute travel time also.
- 47% of households would be prepared to travel between 6 to 15 minutes to parks and recreation grounds with only 14% willing to travel up to 5 minutes.
- Household members will travel further to access youth facilities, with 34% willing to travel 11 to 15 minutes and a further 34% willing to travel 16 to 20 minutes or more. 30% of households would also travel 11 to 15 minutes to access multi-use games facilities.

Importance of footpath/cycle access

- 83% of households confirmed that they would be prepared to walk/cycle further if the quality of the route was improved; and 87% of households also said that if the quality of the route was improved, they would make the journey more often.

Priorities

- The category highlighted by the largest number of households as a high priority for potential improvement/new provision was parks and recreation grounds (67%), children's play areas (62%).
 - Other notable high priorities for improvement include woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves (58%) and footpath, bridleways, and cycle paths (57%).
 - There were two typologies identified by households where there is a need for more facilities which were facilities for teenagers (57%) and allotments (44%).
-

- The majority of typologies were identified as needing improvements to quality in particular parks and recreation grounds (67%), beaches (62%), children’s play areas (57%) and multi-use games areas (49%).
- Improving access at existing facilities was not deemed particularly significant across any typology.

4.3 Public Health – Key Findings

The health profile for South Tyneside is generally worse compared with the England average with the local authority being one of the 20% most deprived local authorities in England. The borough has 12 years different in life expectancy between those with the best and worst health. Adult health is more in line with England average levels of indicators than child health.

The South Tyneside Health and Wellbeing Board works to improve the health and wellbeing of the children, adults and families across the district and reduce health inequalities to help people live longer and healthier lives. The published physical activity and mental health strategies sets out the priorities for both types of wellbeing.

It is estimated that physical inactivity costs South Tyneside over £4,000,000 annually in healthcare costs. It highlights that there are a range of assets that can provide opportunities for increasing physical activity levels including parks and green spaces, sporting facilities and private & community groups.

The mental health strategy highlights open spaces one of the strengths of South Tyneside with beaches and parks creating a thriving environment which contributes to a sense of wellbeing. The three areas for improvement which are outcomes of the strategy are to reduce mental health inequalities, improve children and young people’s mental health and improve flexibility, integration and compassionate response of services.

4.4 Concluding remarks

Response levels to the resident’s survey provided a good cross-section of the borough geographically as well as a mixture of age groups and disabilities. The review of the public health research and data outlined that the health of South Tyneside residents is poor compared to the England average, and that there are large health inequalities between wards within the borough.

The findings provide evidence to support the spatial planning standards recommended for the different typologies of open space (see Section 6).

5.0 AUDIT OF EXISTING OPEN SPACE ASSETS

5.1 General approach

This section sets out the open space typologies which have had standards developed as part of this study, and those which have been mapped, but do not have standards. The typologies of open space have drawn on guidance provided within PPG17, and through discussions with the project team. The agreed list of typologies is seen to be locally derived and appropriate for the type and range of open spaces that exist within the study area.

Although sites have been categorised into different typologies, the multifunctionality of different types of open space is important to recognise e.g., amenity green space, accessible natural green space, parks and recreation grounds and allotments may all provide numerous functions and benefits such as providing space for recreation, habitat for wildlife conservation, flood alleviation, improving air quality, and providing food growing opportunities.

The following typologies have been used in this assessment:

Table 8 *South Tyneside Council Open Space Typologies*

Typologies mapped with standards	Typologies mapped but no standards ²⁰
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allotments • Amenity Green Space (>0.1ha) • Parks and Recreation Grounds (consisting of Parks and Recreation Grounds and Outdoor Sports (Fixed)). • Play Space (Children) • Play Space (Youth) • Accessible Natural Green Space (>0.1ha) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor Sports Space (Restricted Access) • Churchyards and Cemeteries • Education

5.2 Typologies with Standards

5.2.1 Allotments

Allotments provide areas for people to grow their own produce and plants. It is important to be clear about what is meant by the term 'Allotment'. The Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 obliged local authorities to provide sufficient allotments and to let them to persons living in their areas where they considered there was a demand.

The Allotment Act of 1922 defines the term 'allotment garden' as:

²⁰ An explanation for not developing standards for these typologies is outlined in the following sections.

“an allotment not exceeding 40 poles in extent which is wholly or mainly cultivated by the occupier for the production of vegetable or fruit crops for consumption by himself or his family.”

The Allotments Act of 1925 gives protection to land acquired specifically for use as allotments, so called Statutory Allotment Sites, by the requirement for the need for the approval of Secretary of State in event of sale or disposal. Some allotment sites may not specifically have been acquired for this purpose. Such allotment sites are known as “temporary” (even if they have been in use for decades) and are not protected by the 1925 legislation.

5.2.2 Amenity Green Space



Figure 4 *Ferry Street, Jarrow*

The category is considered to include those spaces open to free and spontaneous use by the public, but neither laid out nor managed for a specific function such as a park, public playing field or recreation ground; nor managed as a natural or semi-natural habitat. These areas of open space will be of varied size, but are likely to share the following characteristics:

- Unlikely to be physically demarcated by walls or fences.
- Predominantly laid down to (mown) grass.
- Unlikely to have identifiable entrance points (unlike parks).
- They may have shrub and tree planting, and occasionally formal planted flower beds.
- They may occasionally have other recreational facilities and fixtures (such as play equipment, informal football or ball courts).

Examples might include both small and larger informal grassed areas in housing estates and general recreation spaces. They can serve a variety of functions dependent on their size, shape, location and topography. Some may be used for informal recreation activities, whilst others by themselves, or else collectively, contribute to the overall visual amenity of an area.

Amenity green spaces smaller than 0.1ha (the previous study used 0.1ha) are not included within the analysis for this typology, as it is considered that these sites will have limited recreation function and therefore should not count towards public open space provision.

However, it is noted that there are many smaller amenity/semi-natural spaces and road side verges within the study area which are valuable in terms of their visual amenity and/or biodiversity value and contribute to the wider network of Green Infrastructure. It is not part of the scope of the study to map these smaller spaces.

5.2.3 Parks and Recreation Grounds



Figure 5 *South Marine Park, South Shields*

This typology brings together the function of Parks and Recreation Grounds and Outdoor Sports Space as identified in the former PPG17 typology. The distinction between the two typologies in the Study Area is blurred, with very few formal gardens and many parks and/or outdoor sports space having multi-functions used for both informal and formal recreation. Local people can refer to their local park or ‘rec’, and they do not necessarily make a distinction between outdoor sports space and parks and recreation grounds. Therefore, for the study an overarching typology for Park and Recreation Grounds is recommended.

For the purpose of this study, a Park and Recreation Ground is defined as an open space that:

- Has at least two facilities e.g., a children’s play area and tennis courts, or;
- Has provision for formal sports pitches e.g., football or cricket pitch (informal football would be excluded); or
- Are formally laid out e.g., with identifiable entrance points, formal paths, formal planted shrub beds and flower beds, car parking; and
- Are actively managed and accessible to the public.

The Parks and Recreation Ground typology comprises those areas laid out as pitches or fixed facilities such as tennis which are accessible i.e., they can be walked over/used informally (the pitches and fixed facilities will not be mapped separately).

Pitches or facilities which have limited access e.g., they are fenced off and/or only open to members or clubs are mapped as Outdoor Sport (Private).

The 2019 Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and emerging PPS (2023) provides the detail around the locations of pitches and fixed facilities (including tennis and bowls).

The quantity figure for Parks and Recreation Grounds excludes the provision of children and youth play spaces which have been mapped separately/have a separate typology.

Parks and Recreation Grounds take on many forms, and may embrace a wide range of functions including:

- Play space of many kinds;
- Provision for a range of formal pitch and fixed sports;
- Provision of outdoor gyms and fitness trails;
- Informal recreation and sport;
- Providing attractive walks and cycle routes to work;
- Offering landscape and amenity features;
- Areas of formal planting;
- Providing areas for 'events';
- Providing habitats for wildlife and connection with nature;
- Providing space for food growing;
- Dog walking.

The recommended standards for this open space typology are intended to provide sufficient space for sports facilities, pitches, and ancillary space e.g., footpaths, landscaping etc. The Playing Pitch Strategy should be referred to for evidence relating to recommendations for playing pitch requirements and their provision. The quantity standard is designed to be flexible so that the Council can make the case for what type of open space/facilities are required, this would be justified on the analysis of particular local circumstances and on a case-by-case basis.

5.2.4 Play Space (Children and Youth)



Figure 6

School Street Play Area, Hebburn



Figure 7 *Temple Park Skatepark, South Shields*

It is important to establish the scope of the study in terms of this type of open space. Children and young people will play/‘hang out’ in almost all publicly accessible “space” ranging from the street, town centres and squares, parks, playing fields, “amenity” grassed areas etc. as well as the more recognisable play and youth facility areas such as equipped playgrounds, youth shelters, BMX and skateboard parks and Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) etc. Clearly many of the other types of open space covered by this Study will therefore provide informal play opportunities.

To a child, the whole world is a potential playground: where an adult sees a low wall, a railing, kerb or street bench, a child might see a mini adventure playground or a challenging skateboard obstacle. Play should not be restricted to designated ‘reservations’ and planning and urban design principles should reflect these considerations.

Historically, much planned play provision across the country has been in accordance with guidance provided by the then National Playing Fields Association (now known as Fields in Trust or FIT). Categorisation of play space based on this guidance included the designations: Local Areas for Play (LAPs); Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs); and, Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs). Best practice in terms of play provision has evolved greatly in recent years resulting in part from issues arising out of long-term sustainability of facilities provided through applying the above guidance; recognition of the value of more natural environments for play; principles of inclusivity and overall ‘play value’; recognition of ‘acceptable risk’, and more.

As a consequence of the above, it is not considered appropriate to classify existing play provision in accordance with the hierarchical categorisation of LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs, but instead using a classification that provides more flexibility. The study has therefore recorded the following:

- **Play Space (Children)** – equipped areas of play that cater for the needs of children up to and around 12 years of age.

- **Play Space (Youth)** i.e., Teenage Facilities – informal recreation opportunities for, broadly, the 13 to 17 age group, including skateboard parks, basketball courts, BMX ramps and ‘free access’ Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs).

In practice, there will always be some blurring around the edges in terms of younger children using equipment aimed for youths and vice versa.

5.2.5 Accessible Natural Green Space



Figure 8 *The Leas, South Shields*

For the purpose of this study, accessible natural and semi natural space covers a variety of spaces including meadows, woodland, copses, river valleys and lakes all of which share a trait of having natural characteristics and biodiversity value and are also partly or wholly accessible for informal recreation.

The focus for this typology is those sites where there are definitive boundaries or areas of natural green space which have some form of public access. In some cases, access may not be fully clear, however, there is evidence of some level of informal use and access.

Some sites may provide access in different ways, for example, rivers or lakes are often used for water recreation (e.g., canoeing, fishing, sailing). Whilst access may not be available fully across all areas of these sites (e.g., the middle of a lake or dense scrub in a woodland), the whole site has been included within the assessment.

Some natural spaces have no access at all, and whilst they cannot be formally used by the general community, they can be appreciated from a distance, and contribute to visual amenity, green infrastructure and biodiversity. Whilst every effort was made to exclude these spaces from the open space assessment, as already identified, in certain sites access may not always be clear.

Accessible natural green spaces smaller than 0.1ha are not included within the analysis for this typology, as it is considered that these sites will have limited recreation function and therefore should not count towards public open space provision. However, these smaller

spaces (which have not been mapped as part of this study) have value in terms of visual amenity, biodiversity and contributing to the wider Green Infrastructure network within the borough.

5.3 Typologies with no standards

5.3.1 Churchyards and cemeteries



Figure 9 *Hebburn Cemetery, Hebburn*

The study area has numerous churches and cemeteries, and these provide significant aesthetic value and space for informal recreation such as walking and relaxing. Many are also important in terms of biodiversity. Their importance for informal recreation, aesthetic value and contribution towards biodiversity must be acknowledged, and as such, investment in their upkeep, maintenance and quality is an important factor. Churchyards and Cemeteries will be identified and mapped where known, however, no quantity or access standard for provision will be set, as it is outside the scope of this study to make recommendations related to requirements for new provision.

5.3.2 Education

Many schools and colleges have open space and sports facilities within their grounds. This may range from a small playground to large playing fields with several sports pitches. More often than not, public access to these spaces is restricted often forbidden. Nevertheless, many of the sports facilities are used by local people on both an informal and formal basis. Sports clubs may have local informal arrangements with a school to use their pitches, and in some cases more formal 'dual-use' agreements may be in place. School grounds can also contribute towards the green infrastructure and biodiversity of an area.

Education grounds have been identified and mapped. Quantity, quality and access standards are not being proposed for education sites. This is because they are not openly accessible to the public and whilst important to the local community, there is less opportunity for the Council to influence their provision and management. Community access to education sites is assessed within the separate Playing Pitch Strategy (2019).

5.3.3 Outdoor Sport (Restricted Access)

Outdoor sports spaces which are privately managed, and which may have varying levels of public access (e.g., private sports grounds), have been mapped as Outdoor Sport (Restricted Access).

This typology includes golf courses, where more often than not, public access is restricted. Nevertheless, these facilities are used by local people, and they form part of the Green Infrastructure network. This typology also includes fixed outdoor sports space (including tennis courts and bowling greens) which are privately managed, and not freely accessible.

No quantity or access standards for provision has been set, as it is outside the scope of this study to make recommendations related to requirements for new provision. The Playing Pitch Strategy (2019) covers this typology in more detail and will continue to be addressed in future Playing Pitch Strategy updates.

5.4 Existing provision of open space

5.4.1 Open space provision across the study area

The existing provision of open space²¹ is based on the desktop mapping and site surveys undertaken by Ethos Environmental Planning which included:

- analysis of existing GIS data held by the Council and from other sources such as the Ordnance Survey Greenspace layer;
- desktop mapping of open space from aerial photography;
- liaison with council officers; and
- Site visits to check accessibility, boundaries, typologies, and complete quality audits.

Detailed open space provision maps by ward are provided in Appendix 1 of this report, and a GIS database containing all mapped sites alongside quality results and access buffers has been provided to the Council.

The table below provides a borough wide summary for each open space typology which includes numbers of sites, total hectarage (ha), hectares per 1000 population (ha/1000), minimum, maximum and average sizes.

²¹ As of November 2022, when the mapping was signed off. It is acknowledged that new open spaces will come forward, and there may have been sites that are used by the local community that have not been recorded. The open space dataset will be monitored and refined by the Council, taking into account the best information available at that time, to feed into future updates of this assessment.

Table 9 Summary of existing provision of open space across the study area

Typology	Number of Sites	Ha	Ha/1000	Minimum Size (ha)	Maximum Size (ha)	Average Size (ha)
Allotments	35	41.87	0.28	0.07	5.85	1.20
Amenity Green Space (>0.1Ha)	124	112.55	0.74	0.11	9.01	0.94
Parks and Recreation Grounds	32	211.17	1.40	0.44	72.39	6.60
Outdoor Sport (Fixed)	19	5.09	0.03	0.11	0.76	0.27
Play Space (Children)	40	2.97	0.02	0.02	0.36	0.07
Play Space (Youth)	27	2.22	0.01	0.03	0.64	0.08
Accessible Natural Green Space (>0.1Ha)	49	453.78	3.00	0.50	94.48	9.27
Churchyards and Cemeteries	42	60.18	0.40	0.11	17.91	1.43
Education	85	177.2	1.17	0.22	9.79	2.08
Outdoor Sport (Restricted Access)	35	86.06	0.57	0.07	28.16	2.37

The following tables summarise the provision of open space for each typology, by ward and study area, in hectares (ha) and hectares per 1000 (ha/1000).

The figures (ha and ha/1000) for parks and recreation grounds (combined) are a combination of:

- Parks and recreation grounds; and
- Outdoor sport (fixed).

5.4.2 Open space provision by ward

Table 10 Existing provision of open space (hectares) by ward

Ward	Allotments	Amenity Green Space >0.1Ha	Parks and Recreation Grounds (Combined)	<i>Parks and Recreation Grounds</i>	<i>Outdoor Sport (Fixed)</i>	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)	Accessible Natural Green Space >0.1Ha	Churchyards and Cemeteries	Education	Outdoor Sport (Restricted Access)
Beacon and Bents	0.00	16.68	18.35	17.94	0.41	0.46	0.68	0.00	7.11	4.30	0.00
Bede	0.40	13.79	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.11	0.09	27.08	3.61	4.84	4.86
Biddick and All Saints	1.72	5.85	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.11	16.35	0.12	5.98	5.37
Boldon Colliery	9.47	4.90	3.22	3.22	0.00	0.19	0.20	59.27	0.83	14.95	5.38
Cleadon and East Boldon	5.16	4.64	10.65	10.54	0.11	0.27	0.05	38.42	2.54	4.81	2.76
Cleadon Park	0.00	0.12	60.88	58.96	1.92	0.16	0.10	0.01	0.51	1.62	5.89
Fellgate and Hedworth	0.00	4.05	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.05	25.89	0.27	6.32	5.61
Harton	0.00	4.33	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.20	12.59	0.00
Hebburn North	3.08	6.07	26.04	26.04	0.00	0.10	0.14	18.42	0.69	5.92	0.07
Hebburn South	0.00	10.19	11.97	11.85	0.12	0.13	0.15	23.37	9.17	37.23	3.82
Horsley Hill	5.85	12.33	8.16	8.16	0.00	0.00	0.00	96.00	0.00	7.56	6.03
Monkton	0.18	2.99	16.44	15.84	0.60	0.21	0.10	28.75	0.36	1.40	7.52
Primrose	5.55	8.48	8.65	8.22	0.43	0.23	0.26	54.22	11.13	13.68	0.00
Simonside and Rekendyke	0.00	9.89	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.14	0.10	0.00	1.26	7.60	0.00
West Park	6.11	0.00	13.03	12.04	0.99	0.23	0.15	0.00	0.46	17.12	0.00
Westoe	0.00	2.14	2.56	2.27	0.29	0.10	0.04	0.00	18.35	9.33	2.29
Whitburn and Marsden	3.94	2.42	9.15	8.93	0.22	0.44	0.00	65.98	2.32	8.88	29.83
Whiteleas	0.41	3.68	27.16	27.16	0.00	0.08	0.00	0.02	0.25	13.07	6.63
Borough wide	41.87	112.55	216.26	211.17	5.09	2.97	2.22	453.78	60.18	177.20	86.06

Table 11 Existing provision of open space (hectares per 1000 population) by ward

Ward	Allotments	Amenity Green Space > 0.1Ha	Parks and Recreation Grounds (Combined)	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Outdoor Sport (Fixed)	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)	Accessible Natural Green Space	Churchyards and Cemeteries	Education	Outdoor Sport (Restricted Access)	Mid-2020 Population Estimates
Beacon and Bents	0.00	1.77	1.95	1.91	0.04	0.05	0.07	0.00	0.76	0.46	0.00	9406
Bede	0.05	1.83	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01	3.59	0.48	0.64	0.64	7553
Biddick and All Saints	0.19	0.64	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01	1.80	0.01	0.66	0.59	9095
Boldon Colliery	1.01	0.52	0.34	0.34	0.00	0.02	0.02	6.32	0.09	1.59	0.57	9385
Cleadon and East Boldon	0.62	0.55	1.27	1.26	0.01	0.03	0.01	4.58	0.30	0.57	0.33	8381
Cleadon Park	0.00	0.02	7.95	7.70	0.25	0.02	0.01	0.00	0.07	0.21	0.77	7659
Fellgate and Hedworth	0.00	0.55	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01	3.51	0.04	0.86	0.76	7366
Harton	0.00	0.52	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.15	1.52	0.00	8265
Hebburn North	0.33	0.65	2.79	2.79	0.00	0.01	0.01	1.97	0.07	0.63	0.01	9338
Hebburn South	0.00	1.16	1.36	1.35	0.01	0.01	0.02	2.65	1.04	4.23	0.43	8809
Horsley Hill	0.64	1.34	0.89	0.89	0.00	0.00	0.00	10.46	0.00	0.82	0.66	9174
Monkton	0.02	0.37	2.01	1.94	0.07	0.03	0.01	3.52	0.04	0.17	0.92	8162
Primrose	0.69	1.05	1.07	1.02	0.05	0.03	0.03	6.70	1.37	1.69	0.00	8096

Simonside and Rekendyke	0.00	1.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.00	0.14	0.82	0.00	9299
West Park	0.81	0.00	1.72	1.59	0.13	0.03	0.02	0.00	0.06	2.26	0.00	7576
Westoe	0.00	0.26	0.32	0.28	0.04	0.01	0.00	0.00	2.26	1.15	0.28	8105
Whitburn and Marsden	0.54	0.33	1.24	1.21	0.03	0.06	0.00	8.97	0.32	1.21	4.06	7355
Whiteleas	0.05	0.45	3.35	3.35	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.03	1.61	0.82	8109
Borough wide	0.28	0.74	1.43	1.40	0.03	0.02	0.01	3.00	0.40	1.17	0.57	151133

6.0 THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS

6.1 General

Following the completion of the assessment of local needs and the audit of provision (the first two steps of this study), new standards of provision for open space have been set. This section explains how the standards for the study area have been developed and provides specific information and justification for each of the typologies where standards have been developed.

The standards for open space have been developed in accordance with the NPPF. Standards comprise the following components:

- **Quantity standards:** These are determined by the analysis of existing quantity, consideration of existing local and national standards and benchmarks and evidence gathered from the local needs assessment. It is important that quantity standards are locally derived and are realistic and achievable. The recommended standards need to be robust, evidence based and deliverable through new development and future mechanisms of contributions through on-site or off-site provision.
- **Accessibility standards:** These reflect the needs of all potential users including those with physical or sensory disabilities, young and older people alike. Spaces likely to be used on a frequent and regular basis need to be within easy walking distance and to have safe access. Other facilities where visits are longer but perhaps less frequent, for example country parks, can be further away. Consideration is also given to existing local or national standards and benchmarks.
- **Quality standards:** The standards for each form of provision are derived from the quality audit and existing good practice and include recommended policies to guide the provision of new open space through development in the future.

The principles behind applying the standards

The standards are explained and justified in more detail below. The efficacy of standards will depend heavily on the way that they are applied. Here are some important and interrelated principles:

- The standards that have been set are for **minimum guidance levels of provision**. So, just because geographical areas may have levels of open space provision exceeding the minimum standards, does not mean there is a surplus, as other factors need to be taken into consideration, such as the quality of provision and access to open space i.e. The quantity, accessibility and quality standards need to be considered together – they should not be considered in isolation.
- An inability to provide sufficient quantity might be at least partly compensated for through better quality. Investment in the quality and robustness of open space can also often improve the ‘carrying capacity’ of open spaces and therefore offset some shortcomings in quantitative provision.

- New and improved open space should be designed to optimise multi-functionality to benefit both people and nature/the wider environment e.g., offering wildlife habitats, flood management opportunities, providing recreation opportunities etc. Wherever possible it should heighten residents' overall appreciation, understanding of, and respect for that environment so it becomes an important and valued local resource. Good practice guidance for the design of high quality green space should draw on the Green Flag Award guidance, and new/emerging guidance such as the Building with Nature Benchmark and Natural England's Green Infrastructure Standards Framework.
- Standards will need to be applied to a variety of circumstances, and flexibility of interpretation is the key to success. A pragmatic approach will be essential given the range of circumstances in which they will be used. Where flood management measures such as balancing ponds dominate an open space at the expense of other forms of recreation, these features will not be considered a quantifiable contribution to the provision of on-site open space.

6.2 Allotments

Table 12 Summary of quantity and access standards for allotments

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
0.35 ha/1000 population	15 minutes' walk-time (720m straight line)

Existing national or local standards

National standards for allotments and other such open spaces are difficult to find. The closest comparison to such standards appears to be those set out by the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG). These are as follows:

- Standard Plot Size = 330 sq. yards (250sqm)
- Paths = 1.4m wide for disabled access
- Haulage ways = 3m wide
- Plot holders shed = 12sqm
- Greenhouse = 15sqm
- Polytunnel = 30sqm

South Tyneside SPD 3 sets out a quantity standard of 0.4ha/1000 for allotments, and an access standard of 800m.

The 2015 Open Space Study sets a quantity standard of 0.28ha/1000 (and in the 2019 addendum it is 0.29ha/1000), and an access standard of 15 minutes' walk time.

Justification of a new quantity standard for allotments

- The existing average level of provision across the study area is 0.28ha/1000.
- Provision varies by ward, with some wards having no provision, and a number of wards having high levels of provision compared to the study area average.
- Information provided by the council on their allotment sites shows that there are generally large waiting lists across the study area.

- The community consultation (2022) found that 68% of respondents never use allotments, making this the least used type of open space. However, of those that use allotments frequently (at least monthly), 55% use them almost every day.
- The community consultation (2022) also highlighted that there was a need for more of all types of open space, including allotments.
- Allotments contribute towards the Council's priority of promoting healthy communities, through providing opportunities for outdoor recreation/physical activity and community cohesion (and the associated benefits for health and wellbeing) and to produce healthy locally grown food, which can help improve the diet of residents.
- The propensity for higher density new housing with smaller gardens is likely to increase demand.
- With the above in mind, a standard slightly higher than the existing average level of provision is recommended. Therefore, a standard of **0.35 ha/1000** is proposed for analysing existing provision and for new provision.

Justification of a new access standard for allotments

- It is considered that the availability of allotments is more important than having them very close to home, nevertheless facilities should be relatively nearby.
- The community consultation highlighted that the majority of respondents are willing to travel up to 10 or 15 minutes to reach their allotment, and the preferred mode of travel is by foot (66%).
- South Tyneside SPD 3 recommended an access standard of 800m, and the 2015 Open Space Study recommended an access standard of 15 minutes' walk time.
- Therefore, a standard of no more than **15 minutes' walk time** (or 720 metres straight line) is recommended.

Justification of a new quality standards for allotments

48% of respondents to the community consultation had no opinion on the quality of allotments. Of the remaining 52%, 20% thought they were adequate and 15% thought they were poor.

Allotment sites were not subject to quality audits as part of this study, this was agreed by the project group as the majority of allotments are locked/not accessible.

A number of general recommendations are made in relation to quality, which should include the following where possible (especially applicable to new provision):

- Well-drained soil which is capable of cultivation to a reasonable standard.
 - A sunny, open aspect preferably on a southern facing slope.
 - Limited overhang from trees and buildings either bounding or within the site.
 - Adequate lockable storage facilities, and a good water supply within easy walking distance of individual plots.
 - Provision for composting facilities.
-

- Secure boundary fencing.
- Good access within the site both for pedestrians and vehicles.
- Good vehicular access into the site and adequate parking and manoeuvring space.
- Disabled access.
- Toilets.
- Notice boards.

6.3 Amenity Green Space

Table 13 Summary of quantity and access standards for amenity green space

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
0.80 ha/1000 population (minimum size 0.1 ha)	10 minutes' walk time (480m straight line)

Existing national or local standards

The Fields in Trust (Previously known as the National Playing Fields Association) Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play report 'Beyond the Six Acre Standard' (2018) proposes a benchmark guideline of 0.6ha/1000 population of amenity green space, and a walking distance guideline of 480m. FIT recommend that the quantity guidelines are adjusted to take account of local circumstances.

South Tyneside SPD 3 recommended a quantity standard of 2.92 ha/1000 for parks and open space (i.e., parks and amenity green space), and an access standard of 400m for local parks and open spaces.

The 2015 Open Space Study set a quantity standard of 1.2ha/1000 (and the 2019 Addendum was also in line with this), and an access standard of 5 minutes' walk time for amenity greenspace.

Justification of a new quantity standard for amenity green space

- The existing average level of provision across the study area is 0.74 ha/1000 (for sites greater than 0.1 ha in size).
- Provision varies by ward, with some areas falling well below the average, and others exceeding it.
- The Fields in Trust (Previously known as the National Play Fields Association) Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play report 'Beyond the Six Acre Standard' proposes a benchmark guideline of 0.6ha/1000 population of amenity green space.
- The community consultation (2022) found that respondents thought there was a need for more of all types of open space and recreation facilities, but a majority (66%) highlighted a particular need for more informal open spaces.
- South Tyneside SPD 3 recommended a quantity standard of 2.92 ha/1000 for parks and open space (i.e., parks and amenity green space). The 2015 Open Space Study set a standard of 1.2ha/1000 for amenity greenspace (and the 2019 Addendum was also in line with this).

- Considering the above, a minimum standard of **0.80 ha/1000** (slightly above existing levels of provision) is recommended for analysing existing levels of provision and for new provision of amenity green space.
- When delivering new provision, consideration should be given to combining this with the natural green space standard (i.e., a combined standard of **1.80 ha/1000**) in order to provide bigger, more biodiverse spaces.
- Where a development would result in less than 0.1ha of amenity green space, it will be provided as a single space. For developments that result in more than 0.1ha of amenity green space, the minimum size considered acceptable is 0.1ha. This will avoid a proliferation of small amenity spaces which have no real recreation function.

Justification of a new access standard for amenity green space

- Amenity green spaces provide important local access to green space for informal recreation and therefore should be close to home.
- FIT ‘Beyond the Six Acre Standard’ proposes a walking distance guideline of 480m.
- South Tyneside SPD 3 recommended an access standard of 400m for local parks and open spaces. The 2015 Open Space Study set an access standard of 5 minutes’ walk time.
- The community consultation (2022) found that 49% of households would expect informal open spaces to be within a 10-minute travel time (with the preferred mode of travel being by foot (80%).
- Therefore, a standard of no more than **10 minutes’ walk time** (480 metres straight line) is recommended.

Justification of a new quality standard for amenity green space

The value of informal/amenity green space must be recognised especially within housing areas, where it can provide important local opportunities for play, exercise, visual amenity and biodiversity that are almost immediately accessible. It is important to strike the correct balance between having accessible and attractive space to meet the needs of the community and having too much which may be difficult to manage properly and therefore a potential liability and source of nuisance. It is important that amenity green space should be capable of use for at least some forms of public recreation activity.

The community consultation responses highlight a variation in the perceived quality of informal greenspaces. Key quality issues identified through the quality audits (October 2022) litter and fly tipping, and a lack of maintenance and signage in some areas.

It is therefore recommended that, in addition to the minimum size threshold identified above (0.1 ha), all amenity green space should be subject to landscape design, ensuring the following quality principles:

- Capable of supporting informal recreation such as a kickabout, space for dog walking or space to sit and relax;

- Include high quality planting of trees and/or shrubs to create landscape structure and biodiversity value, in order to optimise natural capital and ecosystem services²²;
- Include paths along main desire lines (lit where appropriate);
- Be designed to ensure safety and personal security; and,
- Be designed to ensure easy maintenance.

6.4 Parks and Recreation Grounds

Table 14 Summary of quantity and access standards for parks and recreation grounds

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
1.40 ha/1000 population	15 minutes' walk time (720 metres straight line) for neighbourhood and district parks

Existing national or local standards

The Fields in Trust (FIT) Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play report 'Beyond the Six Acre Standard' (2018) proposes a benchmark guideline of 0.80ha/1000 population for parks and gardens, with a walking distance guideline of 710m. In addition to this they also recommend the following standards:

- Playing pitches: 1.20ha/1000 population with a walking distance of 1,200m
- All outdoor sports: 1.6ha/1000 population with a walking distance of 1,200m
- Equipped/designated play areas: 0.25ha/1000 population, with a walking distance of 100m for Local Areas for Play (LAPs), 400m for Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) and 1000m for Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs).
- Other outdoor provision (MUGAs and skateboard parks): 0.30ha/1000 population and a walking distance of 700m.

The South Tyneside SPD 3 recommended a quantity standard of 2.92 ha/1000 for parks and open space (i.e., parks and amenity green space). It recommended different access standards for parks and open spaces based on their hierarchy: for local spaces it is 400m, for neighbourhood spaces it is 800m and for district spaces it is 3000m.

The 2015 Open Space Study (and 2019 Addendum) set a quantity standard of 0.68ha/1000 and an access standard of 10 minutes' walk time and also 30 minutes' drive time²³.

Justification of a new quantity standard for parks and recreation grounds

- The existing average level of provision across the study area is 1.43 ha/1000.

²² Natural Capital is the world's stocks of natural assets which include geology, soil, air, water and all living things. We derive from natural capital a wide range of services, often called ecosystem services, which make human life possible and include production of food and water, regulation of floods, and non-material benefits such as recreational and spiritual benefits.

²³ Drive-time standards have not been proposed as these are normally only appropriate for strategic sites. Drive-time standards generally do not work well for analysing access to local facilities/open space, as they do not generally show where the gaps in access are, and in addition, the consultation has shown that the majority of households access the various open space typologies on foot.

- There is an additional 0.53 ha/1000 of outdoor sport (restricted access) which includes a variety of uses (including golf courses).
- The community consultation highlighted that in general, households think there is a need for more of all types of open space and recreation facilities. However, when asked about the priorities for improvement, 67% said there was a need for improved quality of parks and recreation grounds, compared to 28% who thought there was a need for more parks.
- The Fields in Trust (FIT) Guidance ‘Beyond the Six Acre Standard’ proposes a benchmark guideline of 0.80ha/1000 population for parks and gardens.
- The South Tyneside SPD 3 recommended a quantity standard of 2.92 ha/1000 for parks and open space (i.e., parks and amenity green space). The 2015 Open Space Study (and 2019 Addendum) set a standard of 0.68ha/1000.
- Considering the above, a quantity standard of **1.40ha/1000** (in line with the existing average level of provision) is recommended for analysing existing provision and the requirements for new provision.
- It should be reiterated that this standard is intended to provide sufficient space for a variety of park uses and facilities, and is designed to be flexible so that the council can make the case for what facilities/sports are required. The separate Playing Pitch Strategy will deal with the detail around pitch/sports requirements.

Justification of a new access standard for parks and recreation grounds

- The community consultation (2022) found that 47% of households would be prepared to travel between 6 to 15 minutes to parks and recreation grounds, and the preferred mode of travel is by foot (80%).
- FIT ‘Beyond the Six Acre Standard’ proposes a walking distance guideline of 710m for parks and gardens and 1,200m for playing pitches and outdoor sports.
- South Tyneside SPD recommends different access standards for parks and open spaces based on their hierarchy: for local spaces it is 400m, for neighbourhood spaces it is 800m and for district spaces it is 3000m. The 2015 Open Space Study set an access standard of 10 minutes’ walk time and also 30 minutes’ drive time.
- Considering the above, a standard of no more than **15 minutes’ walk time** (or 720 metres straight line) is recommended (although it is acknowledged that district parks will have a wider catchment area).

Justification of a new quality standard for park and recreation grounds

Parks and recreation grounds were rated as good or very good by 52% of respondents, adequate by 29% and poor or very poor by 17%. When asked about the priorities for improvement, 67% of respondents thought that parks are a high priority for improvement and that improvements are needed in quality (rather than more provision).

The quality audits carried out by Ethos (October 2022) also found a large variation in the quality of parks.

National guidance relevant to this typology is provided in the ‘Green Flag’ quality standard for parks which sets out benchmark criteria for quality open spaces. New and emerging guidance is also available from Building with Nature and the Natural England Green Infrastructure Standards Framework.

For outdoor sports provision, Sport England and the various national governing bodies of sport have produced a wealth of useful documents outlining the quality standards for facilities such as playing pitches, changing rooms, MUGAs and tennis courts plus associated ancillary facilities. It is recommended that the guidance provided in these documents is adopted by the Council, and that all new and improved provision seeks to meet these guidelines.

6.5 Play Space (children and youth)

Table 15 Summary of quantity and access standards for play space (children and youth)

Typology		Quantity Standard		Access Standard
Children’s	Play Space	0.1	ha/1000 population	10 minutes’ walk time (480m straight line)
	Youth Play Space	0.1	ha/1000 population	15 minutes’ walk time (720m straight line)

Existing national or local standards

The FIT guidance ‘Beyond the Six Acre Standard’ (2018) recommends provision of 0.25ha/1000 population of equipped/designated play areas, with a walking distance of 100m for Local Areas for Play (LAPs), 400m for Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) and 1000m for Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs). It also recommends a quantity standard of 0.30ha/1000 for MUGAs and skateboard parks and a walking distance of 700m.

The following minimum size guidelines and buffers are recommended by FIT:

Playable space (LAP type - need not be equipped)

1. Minimum active playable space of 100 sq. m (need not be equipped).
2. Buffer zone of 5m minimum depth between the active playable space and the nearest dwelling.

Equipped play area (LEAP type)

1. Minimum activity zone area of 400 sq. m.
2. Buffer zone of not less than 10m in depth between the edge of the equipped activity zone and the boundary of the nearest dwelling and a minimum of 20m between the equipped activity zone and the habitable room facade of the dwelling.

Teen Play including a MUGA (NEAP type)

1. Minimum activity zone area of 1000 sq. m divided into two parts; one part containing a range of playground equipment; and the other a hard surface MUGA of at least 465 sq. m.

2. Buffer zone of not less than 30m in depth between the activity zone and the boundary of the nearest dwelling. A greater distance may be needed where purpose built skateboarding facilities are provided.

The South Tyneside SPD 3 recommended a quantity standard of 0.23 ha/1000 and access standards of 100m for local provision and 400m for neighbourhood provision for children and young people.

The 2015 Open Space Study (and 2019 Addendum) set a quantity standard of 0.04ha/1000, and an access standard of 10 minutes' walk time for provision for children and young people.

Justification of new quantity standards for play spaces

- The existing average level of provision of children's play space across the study area is 0.02 ha/1000, and for youth play space it is 0.01 ha/1000.
- The community consultation (2022) highlighted that households think there is a need for more children's play areas (55%) and facilities for teenagers (62%).
- The FIT guidance 'Beyond the Six Acre Standard' recommends provision of 0.25ha/1000 population of equipped/designated play areas, and 0.30ha/1000 for MUGAs and skateboard parks. These standards are considered to be high and difficult to deliver (this is in Ethos' experience).
- The average levels of provision across the city for both children's and youth spaces are considered to be very low.
- The South Tyneside SPD 3 recommended a quantity standard of 0.23 ha/1000 for provision for children and young people. The 2015 Open Space Study (and 2019 Addendum) set a quantity standard of 0.04ha/1000 for provision for children and young people. This is considered to be very low.
- Considering the above factors, it is recommended that the standards for children and youth play spaces are increased against the current average levels of provision, with a standard of **0.1ha/1000** recommended for analysing existing provision and the requirements for new provision for both children's and youth play space.
- The hierarchy approach (LAPs, LEAPs, NEAPs etc.) is dated and it directs developers towards providing standardised play rather than thinking about local need, and opportunities for more creative play design e.g. natural play. A single standard for children's play aims to move away from lots of little play areas which are not sustainable, and providing fewer, bigger, better play areas.
- It is considered that the minimum size of equipped play provision would be 100 sqm (0.01ha). In addition to this, buffer zones (which will take a landscape design approach) will be provided between 5m and 30m, depending on the size of the play area. Proximity to housing requires careful consideration in order to avoid conflict.
- It is also recognised that open space (not only equipped children's play areas and youth facilities) provides 'playable space'.

Justification of new access standards for play spaces

- Generally, there is a requirement for children’s play spaces closer to home, due to the reliance on walking, whereas for youth play spaces older children can walk further and will often use other modes of transport such as cycling.
- This is reflected in the FIT ‘Beyond the Six Acre Standard’, which proposes a walking distance guideline of 100m for Local Areas for Play (LAPs), 400m for Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) and 1000m for Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs). For MUGA’s and skateboard parks FIT propose a walking distance guideline of 700m.
- The community consultation (2022) found that 50% of households would expect children’s play areas to be within a 10-minute travel time, of which 21% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes. In general, households would be willing to travel further to access youth facilities, with 34% willing to travel 11 to 15 minutes and a further 34% willing to travel 16 to 20 minutes or more.
- South Tyneside SPD 3 set access standards of 100m for local provision for children and young people, and 400m for neighbourhood. The 2015 Open Space Study set an access standard of 10 minutes’ walk time for provision for children and young people.
- Considering the above, the following access standards are recommended:
 - Children’s play space - **10 minutes’ walk time** (480 metres straight line)
 - Youth play space – **15 minutes’ walk time** (720 metres straight line).

Justification of a new quality standard for play spaces

The community consultation found that facilities for teenagers were the poorest rated type of open space in terms of quality (44% of households thought they were poor or very poor, although 31% had no opinion). For children’s play spaces there was a more even spread of those thinking the quality is good (24%), average (23%) and poor (21%), and 20% also had no opinion. The Ethos quality audits (October 2022) also highlighted large variation in the quality of children’s and youth play spaces.

It is expected that the design of new play provision would take a landscape design approach (designed to fit its surroundings and enhance the local environment), incorporating play into the overall landscape masterplan for new development, and could include natural play e.g. grassy mounds, planting, logs, and boulders to make a more attractive and playable setting for equipment, and planting which can also help attract birds and other wildlife to literally bring the play space alive. In densely populated urban areas with little or no natural or green space, this more natural approach can help soften the hard, urban landscape.

The challenge for play providers is to provide the best possible play opportunities, and to create play spaces which will attract children, capture their imagination and give them scope to play in new, more exciting, and more creative ways e.g. moving away from fencing play areas (where it is safe to do so), so that the equipment is integrated with its setting, making it feel more inviting to explore and so people are free to use the space without feeling restricted.

Moving forward, Play England would like their new Design Guide; ‘Design for Play’ to be referenced and added as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in standard configuration. Play England have also developed a ‘Quality Assessment Tool’ which can be used to judge the quality of individual play spaces. It is recommended that the Council considers adopting this as a means of assessing the quality of play spaces in their District. Play England also highlight a potential need for standards for smaller settlements and rural areas where the doorstep, local, neighbourhood, and destination hierarchy is unlikely to be appropriate.

Disability access is also an important issue for Play England, and they would like local authorities to adopt the KIDS²⁴ publication; ‘*Inclusion by Design*’ as an SPD. Their most recent guidance document, ‘*Better Places to Play through Planning*’ gives detailed guidance on setting local standards for access, quantity and quality of playable space and is considered as a background context for the standards suggested in this study.

6.6 Accessible Natural Green Space

Table 16 Summary of quantity and access standards for accessible natural green space

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
1.0ha/1000 population (for new provision)	20 minutes’ walk time (960m straight line) and ANGSt standards

Existing national or local standards

Natural England Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGSt):

ANGSt recommends 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 1 hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population.

The Woodland Trust has researched and developed the Woodland Access Standard (WASSt) for local authorities to aim for which is written in the Space for People publication²⁵. They believe that the WASSt can be an important policy tool complimenting other access standards using in delivering green infrastructure for health benefits.

The WASSt is complimentary to Natural England’s ANGSt and is endorsed by Natural England. The Woodland Access Standard recommends:

²⁴ KIDS, is a charity which in its 40 years, has pioneered a number of approaches and programmes for disabled children and young people. KIDS was established in 1970 and in 2003, KIDS merged with KIDSACTIVE, previously known as the Handicapped Adventure Play Association.

²⁵ Space for People: targeting action for woodland access – May 2017

- that no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible natural woodland of no less than 2ha in size.
- that there should be at least one area of accessible natural woodland of no less than 20ha within 4km (8km round-trip) of people's homes.

The FIT guidance 'Beyond the Six Acre Standard' also recommends a quantity standard of 1.8ha per 1000 population for natural and semi-natural green space, with a walking distance of 720m.

The South Tyneside SPD 3 recommended a quantity standard of 2.89ha/1000 and access standards of 5000m for district sites, 2000m for neighbourhood sites and 300m for local sites.

The 2015 Open Space Study set a quantity standard of 3.29ha/1000 and an access standard of 15 minutes' walk time and also 30 minutes' drive time for natural and semi-natural green space.

Justification of a new quantity standard for accessible natural green space

- The existing average level of provision of accessible natural green space across the study area is 3.0 ha/1000.
- There is uneven distribution of accessible natural green space across the study area. Many wards have no provision or fall below this average level of provision, and there are a number of wards with high levels of provision compared to the average level.
- The importance of natural green spaces (along with other open spaces) is recognised not only in their contribution to recreation and health and wellbeing, but also importantly in terms of green infrastructure and nature conservation/biodiversity and climate change mitigation/adaptation.
- The community consultation found that 74% of households think there is a need for more woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves.
- The FIT guidance 'Beyond the Six Acre Standard' also recommends a quantity standard of 1.8ha per 1000 population for natural and semi-natural green space. This is considered difficult to achieve in terms of new provision, when considering the wider open space requirements.
- The South Tyneside SPD 3 recommended a quantity standard of 2.89ha/1000. The 2015 Open Space Study set a standard of 3.29ha/1000. These are considered very high, and difficult to achieve in terms of new provision (in Ethos' experience).
- Considering the above, a standard of **1.0 ha/1000** is proposed for analysing the requirements for new provision, and also for assessing the requirements for new provision. This is considered to be realistic and achievable in terms of new provision.
- As already mentioned under the quantity standard for amenity green space, when delivering new provision, consideration should be given to combining this with the informal green space standard (i.e., a combined standard of 1.80 ha/1000) in order to provide bigger, more biodiverse spaces, in accordance with the NPPF.
- Just because a ward may have levels of provision above the minimum standard, it does not mean these spaces are surplus to requirement (as access and quality also need to

be considered, and they may be important in terms of heritage, biodiversity, green infrastructure etc). The minimum standard for assessing existing provision serves to highlight those areas with low levels of provision, and therefore where new provision should be focused.

Justification of new access standards for accessible natural green space

- The FIT guidance ‘Beyond the Six Acre Standard’ recommends a walking distance of 720m for natural and semi-natural green space.
- South Tyneside SPD 3 set access standards of 5000m for district sites, 2000m for neighbourhood sites and 300m for local sites. The 2015 Open Space Study set an access standard of 15 minutes’ walk time and also 30 minutes’ drive time for natural and semi-natural green space.
- The community consultation found that the majority of households are generally willing to travel further to access this type of open space compared to other typologies, with 64% willing to travel up to 20 minutes to water recreation facilities, and 63% to woodland, wildlife and nature areas.
- The Natural England **ANGSt Standards** will be applied to identify key gaps in access and provision. However, it is acknowledged that the standard of 300m for sites above 2ha in size will be difficult to achieve in many cases, and consideration of access to smaller spaces below 2ha in size is also needed.
- It is therefore recommended that an access standard of **20 minutes’ walk time** (960m straight line) is used to identify key gaps in access to all accessible natural green spaces above 0.1ha in size.

Justification of a new quality standards for accessible natural green space

The shape and size of space provided should allow for meaningful and safe recreation. Provision might be expected to include (as appropriate) elements of woodland, wetland, heathland and meadow, and could also be made for informal public access through recreation corridors. For larger areas, where car-borne visits might be anticipated, some parking provision will be required. The larger the area the more valuable sites will tend to be in terms of their potential for enhancing local conservation interest and biodiversity. Wherever possible these sites should be linked to help improve their wildlife value and Green Infrastructure functionality as part of a network.

In areas where it may be impossible or inappropriate to provide additional accessible natural green space consistent with the standard, other approaches should be pursued which could include (for example):

- Changing the management of marginal space on playing fields and parks to enhance biodiversity.
 - Encouraging living green roofs as part of new development/ redevelopment.
 - Encouraging the creation of native mixed species hedgerows.
 - Additional use of long grass management regimes.
 - Improvements to watercourses and water bodies.
 - Innovative use of new drainage schemes / Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).
-

- Use of trees and plants with biodiversity value in high quality soft landscaping of new developments.

In any event the above are principles to be pursued and encouraged at all times.

Protecting, creating, enhancing and retro-fitting accessible natural and semi-natural features is a cost-effective and win-win approach to delivering positive outcomes for people and wildlife. The Building with Nature²⁶ benchmark quality standards for the design and delivery of GI could be advocated by the council and included within their GI policy.

6.7 Summary of open space quantity and access standards

Table 17 Summary of open space quantity and access standards²⁷

Typology	Quantity standards for existing provision and new provision (ha/1000 population)	Access standard
Allotments	0.35	15 minutes' walk time (720m straight line)
Amenity Green Space (sites >0.1 ha)	0.80	10 minutes' walk time (480m straight line)
Parks and Recreation Grounds	1.40	15 minutes' walk time (720m straight line)
Play Space (Children)	0.10	10 minutes' walk time (480m straight line)
Play Space (Youth)	0.10	15 minutes' walk time (720m straight line)
Accessible Natural Green Space	1.00	ANGSt standards + 20 minutes' walk time (960m straight line)
Total for new provision	3.75 ha/1000	

²⁶ <https://www.buildingwithnature.org.uk/about>

²⁷ In addition to these open space standards, the PPS sets out the requirements for playing pitches.

7.0 APPLYING LOCAL STANDARDS

7.1 Introduction

This part of the report uses the recommended standards to analyse open space provision across the study area. This section provides an overview of provision and supply across the study area and individual wards, with more detailed maps provided in Appendices 1, 2 and 3.

This section discusses the application of the proposed new standards and their components in respect of 'quantity', 'quality', and 'access'.

Quantity analysis

The quantity of provision is assessed using the recommended quantity standards for each of the typologies where a quantity standard has been developed. Recommended standards are expressed as hectares of open space per 1000 population.

The quantity assessment looks at the existing levels of provision, then uses the recommended standard to assess the required level of provision. From this a calculation is made of the supply, which will either be sufficient or insufficient.

Access analysis

This section of the report provides analysis of the recommended access standards for each typology across the study area. The maps and analysis in this section are intended to be indicative, providing an overall picture of provision and highlighting any key issues across the study area.

However, the key to access analysis, is understanding the picture at a more localised level, therefore, maps showing local access provision by ward are included in Appendix 2.

Quality analysis

This section of the report makes analysis of each typology across the study area – it highlights any common themes or issues that have arisen from the consultation and provides a summary of the quality audit results at the study area level. The detailed quality audits have been provided to the Council as part of the GIS database, and maps by ward are provided at Appendix 3 which show the ranking of each open space audited (excellent, good, fair or poor).

7.2 Application of quantity standards

7.2.1 Current supply against the standards

The table below shows the existing supply (in hectares) of open space for each typology for each of the wards, and at the study area level. The supply is calculated using the population figures (using 2020 ONS mid-year population estimates) and the quantity of open space compared to what the requirements for open space are against the recommended standards.

Positive figures show where the study area/wards meet the quantity standard for the open space typology, and negative figures show where there is a shortfall in supply against the quantity standard.

Although these figures highlight where there are shortfalls in supply against the quantity standards and therefore where new provision should be sought, in many cases new provision will not be achievable (unless, for example, through new development). These figures can help inform decisions about the form of new open spaces and improvements to existing open spaces, rather than it being imperative that every ward must achieve a ‘+’ number.

It is important that these figures are considered alongside the access analysis (see section below), as even if a ward is showing a shortfall in the supply of a particular typology, there may be access to open space in a neighbouring ward.

Table 18 Open space supply (ha) by ward and study area

Ward	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Parks and Recreation Grounds (Combined)	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)	Accessible Natural Green Space
Beacon and Bents	-3.29	9.16	5.18	-0.48	-0.26	-9.41
Bede	-2.24	7.75	-10.57	-0.65	-0.67	19.53
Biddick and All Saints	-1.46	-1.43	-12.73	-0.86	-0.80	7.25
Boldon Colliery	6.19	-2.61	-9.92	-0.75	-0.74	49.88
Cleadon and East Boldon	2.23	-2.06	-1.08	-0.57	-0.79	30.04
Cleadon Park	-2.68	-6.01	50.16	-0.61	-0.67	-7.65
Fellgate and Hedworth	-2.58	-1.84	-10.31	-0.67	-0.69	18.52
Harton	-2.89	-2.28	-11.57	-0.83	-0.83	-8.27
Hebburn North	-0.19	-1.40	12.97	-0.83	-0.79	9.08
Hebburn South	-3.08	3.14	-0.36	-0.75	-0.73	14.56
Horsley Hill	2.64	4.99	-4.68	-0.92	-0.92	86.83
Monkton	-2.68	-3.54	5.01	-0.61	-0.72	20.59
Primrose	2.72	2.00	-2.68	-0.58	-0.55	46.12
Simonside and Rekendyke	-3.25	2.45	-13.02	-0.79	-0.83	-9.30
West Park	3.46	-6.06	2.42	-0.53	-0.61	-7.58

Westoe	-2.84	-4.34	-8.79	-0.71	-0.77	-8.11
Whitburn and Marsden	1.37	-3.46	-1.15	-0.30	-0.74	58.62
Whiteleas	-2.43	-2.81	15.81	-0.73	-0.81	-8.09
Borough wide	-11.03	-2.99	4.67	-12.14	-12.89	302.65

Table 18 shows that open space provision varies across wards and typologies, with some meeting the standards and some falling below e.g., for both children and youth play space there are shortfalls in provision in every ward within the study area. This will be an important consideration when determining the need for on-site open space as part of new development.

Just because a typology is in sufficient supply, this does not mean it is 'surplus' to requirements, as the access and quantity standards also need to be considered alongside the quantity requirements. There may also be other factors such as a sites nature conservation, historic or cultural value, or its contribution to the Green Infrastructure network which mean it should be protected (see Section 8.2 of this report).

7.2.2 Future need for open space

Planned housing growth

This section of the report considers the overall implications for open space provision from the predicted population growth resulting from planned housing growth. **It is acknowledged that due to proposed changes to national policy, there may be changes to the housing requirement/strategy stated below, and therefore this section of the report may be subject to change/require updating. The calculation for the open space requirements has been provided (see footnote 28), so that the Council can update this section of the report and apply the quantity standards to different scenarios as required.**

The emerging draft Local Plan (2022) (Regulation 18) is planning for 5778 new homes from 2021 to 2039. The average household size in South Tyneside is 2.4 persons (based on the 2021 Census). This would result in an estimated population increase of 13,876.

The figures for open space requirements are for indicative purposes - the calculations are based on all open space being provided on site (which will not be the reality in some cases, as consideration of the individual development size and proximity to existing open spaces needs to be taken into account (see Section 8)).

Based on an estimated population increase of 13,876, this is likely to result in the following indicative open space requirements up to 2039 (using the quantity standards set out in Section 6.7, Table 17):

- Allotments: 4.86ha²⁸
- Amenity green space: 11.10ha
- Parks and recreation grounds: 19.43ha
- Play space (children): 1.39ha
- Play space (youth): 1.39ha
- Accessible natural green space: 13.88ha

More detail around the application of the open space standards and a recommended costings methodology for open space provision/contributions is provided in Section 8.7 of this report.

The effectiveness of standards will depend heavily on the way that they are applied. Some important principles have been set out in Section 6.1 to help guide their application.

Impact of allocated sites on open space

The figure below shows the proposed allocated sites, regeneration sites and urban growth areas (GIS data provided by the Council dated Jan 2022) overlain with the open space mapping. Out of the 60 proposed allocated sites, there are 23 which overlap (to varying degrees) with open space (allotments, parks, amenity green space, accessible natural green space or play space).

Due to the shortfalls in the majority of typologies and wards, the priority will be for the protection and/or alternative provision of open space, to compensate for any loss and also meet the additional requirements from the increased population. Where on-site provision of open space is not viable, quality enhancements (which can also improve the carrying capacity of open space) to existing open spaces will be required (see Section 6.1). **On-site provision should always be considered as the first solution.**

A sample of 3 of these proposed allocated sites have been reviewed for their impact on open space and the key priorities for each site in relation to open space provision (i.e., they are not all the sites that are proposed to be allocated that could impact on open space provision). These are examples that could be used to guide South Tyneside Council in applying similar solutions to other proposed allocated sites as required. The proposed allocated sites that have been reviewed below are as follows:

- H25 Perth Green Youth Centre.
- H29 Land at Falmouth Drive.
- H34 Land south-west of Prince Consort Road.

²⁸ The quantity requirement for open space is calculated as follows: The open space quantity standard is divided by 1000 and then multiplied by the proposed population increase. An example for allotments is provided: $0.35/1000 \times 13,876 = 4.86$.

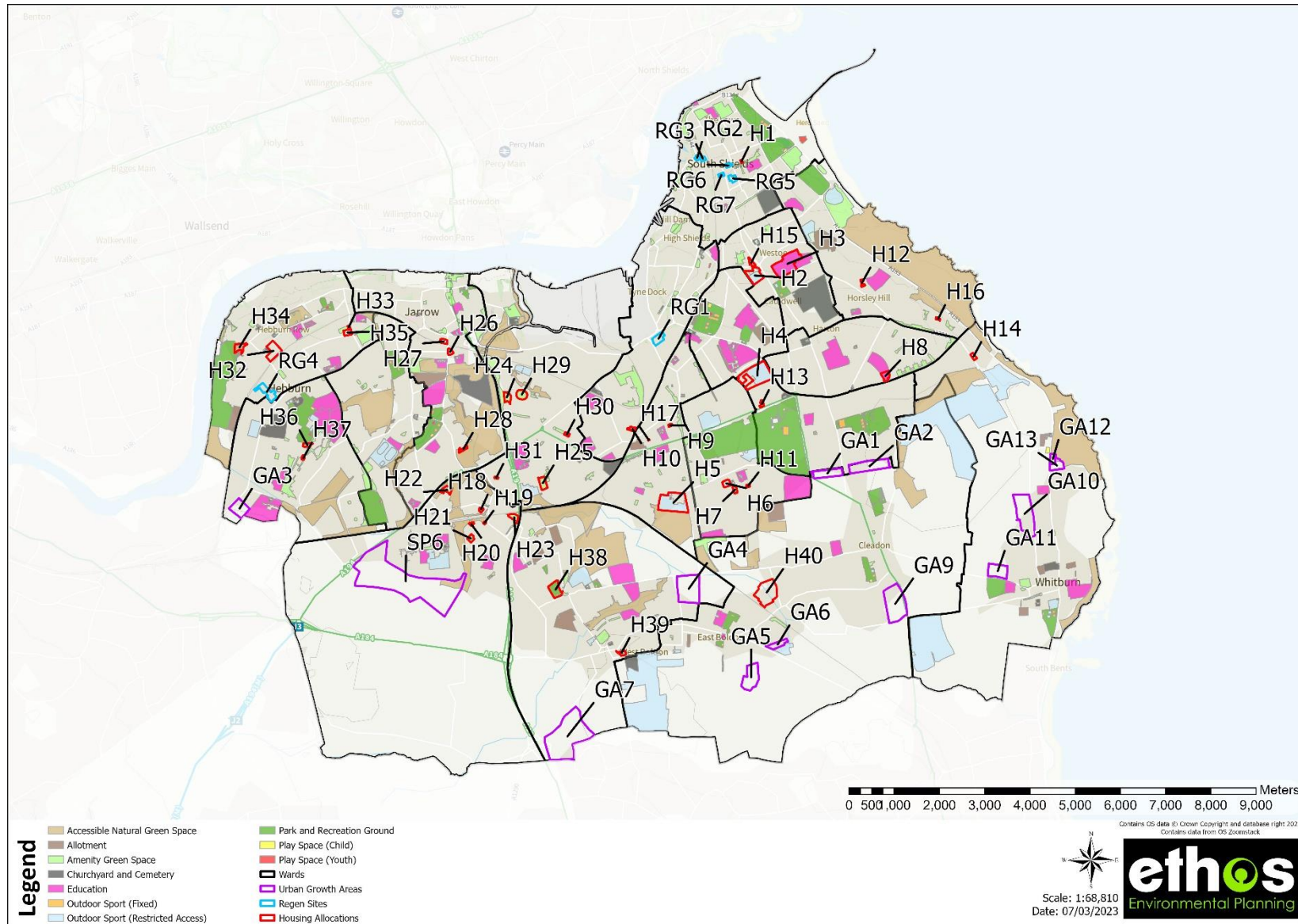


Figure 10 Open space overlain with allocated sites, regeneration sites and urban growth areas (Jan 2022)

Bede Ward

Existing open space provision

Quantity	Access	Quality
Sufficient supply of amenity green space and accessible natural green space. Shortfalls in allotments, parks and play space (children and youth).	Very large gap in access to parks and small gaps in access to allotments and children's play space. Good access to amenity green space, youth play space and accessible natural green space (except for the 2ha+ sites within 300m ANGSt).	The quality of open space within the ward is fair to good. However, 9 out of 19 sites assessed scored poor for at least one criterion.

H25: Perth Green Youth Centre

Capacity: 44 dwellings.

Estimated population increase: 106 persons (capacity multiplied by average household size, 2.4 persons).

Typology and size of open space impacted: Whole of 1.07ha of amenity green space and 0.05ha of play space (youth). (whole of proposed allocated site boundary is within open space).

Priorities: The loss of the amenity green space would not result in a shortfall in supply or gap in access due to nearby amenity green spaces. The proposal size (see Table 28) would result in the requirement for on-site provision of amenity green space and accessible natural green space. However, due to the good access and supply of amenity green space and accessible natural green space, improvements to the quality of nearby existing open space is likely to be a priority.

The loss of the youth play space would worsen the existing shortfall in supply of youth provision and also create a large gap in access. Therefore, the priority would be to retain/enhance the existing youth provision, or if this is not viable, to pool contributions for alternative off site provision nearby.

H29: Land at Falmouth Drive

Capacity: 40 dwellings.

Estimated population increase: 96 persons (capacity multiplied by average household size, 2.4 persons).

Typology and size of open space impacted: 1.37ha of amenity green space (whole site).

Priorities: The loss of the amenity green space would not result in a shortfall in supply or a gap in access to amenity green space. The proposal size (see Table 28) would result in the requirement for on-site provision of amenity green space and accessible natural green space. However, due to the good access and supply of amenity green space and accessible natural green space, improvements to the quality of nearby existing open space is likely to be a priority.

Hebburn North Ward

Existing open space provision

Quantity	Access	Quality
Sufficient supply of parks and recreation grounds and accessible natural green space. Shortfalls in allotments, amenity green space and play space (children and youth).	Good access to parks and amenity green space, some large gaps in access to allotments, children’s play space and youth play space. Access to accessible natural green space against the 20 minute walk time buffer, but gaps against ANGSt.	Sites within the western part of the ward were assessed as good quality, where as sites in the eastern part were assessed as fair to poor. All sites assessed as fair (3 sites) scored poor for at least 1 criterion, and also 1 site assessed as good.

H34: Land south-west of Prince Consort Road

Capacity: 46 dwellings.

Estimated population increase: 110 persons (capacity multiplied by average household size, 2.4 persons).

Typology and size of open space impacted: Whole of accessible natural green space, 1.13ha in size.

Priorities: The loss of the accessible natural green space would not result in a shortfall in supply or a gap in access. The proposal size (see Table 28) would result in the requirement for on-site provision of amenity green space and accessible natural green space. Due to the good access and supply of accessible natural green space, improvements to the quality of nearby existing accessible natural green space is likely to be the priority over on site provision. However, due to the shortfalls in supply of amenity green space, on site provision in line with the quantity standards (minimum 0.09ha) should be a priority.

Other considerations such as the importance of the site for nature conservation, green infrastructure and biodiversity are outside of the scope of this study.

7.3 Application of access standards

This section provides an overview of access to different types of open space typologies across the study area, using the access standards summarised in Table 17. **The maps are intended to provide an overview and are for illustrative purposes only. More detailed maps by ward are provided for each typology within Appendix 2.**

The maps show the walk-time buffers for each open space typology and are created using QGIS and the OSM Tools plugin which relies on the OpenStreetMap paths and street network to accurately map realistic potential walking routes. The buffers are based on a walk-time of 5 kilometres/3.1 miles an hour²⁹.

Table 2 (Section 2.4 of this report) shows how walk-time relates to straight-line distances and pedestrian route distances. The straight-line walking distances do not take into account roads or barriers to access and so the actual route walked (the pedestrian route) is generally further i.e., straight-line distances are around 60% of actual distances. The more basic straight-line buffer access analysis approach has been used for the Natural England ANGSt standards, which define straight line buffers and not walk time.

²⁹ This is in line with the British Heart Foundation state as an average walking pace on country and forestry footpaths: <https://www.bhf.org.uk/how-you-can-help/events/training-zone/walking-training-zone/walking-faqs>

7.3.1 Access to allotments, amenity green space, parks and recreation grounds and play space (children and youth)

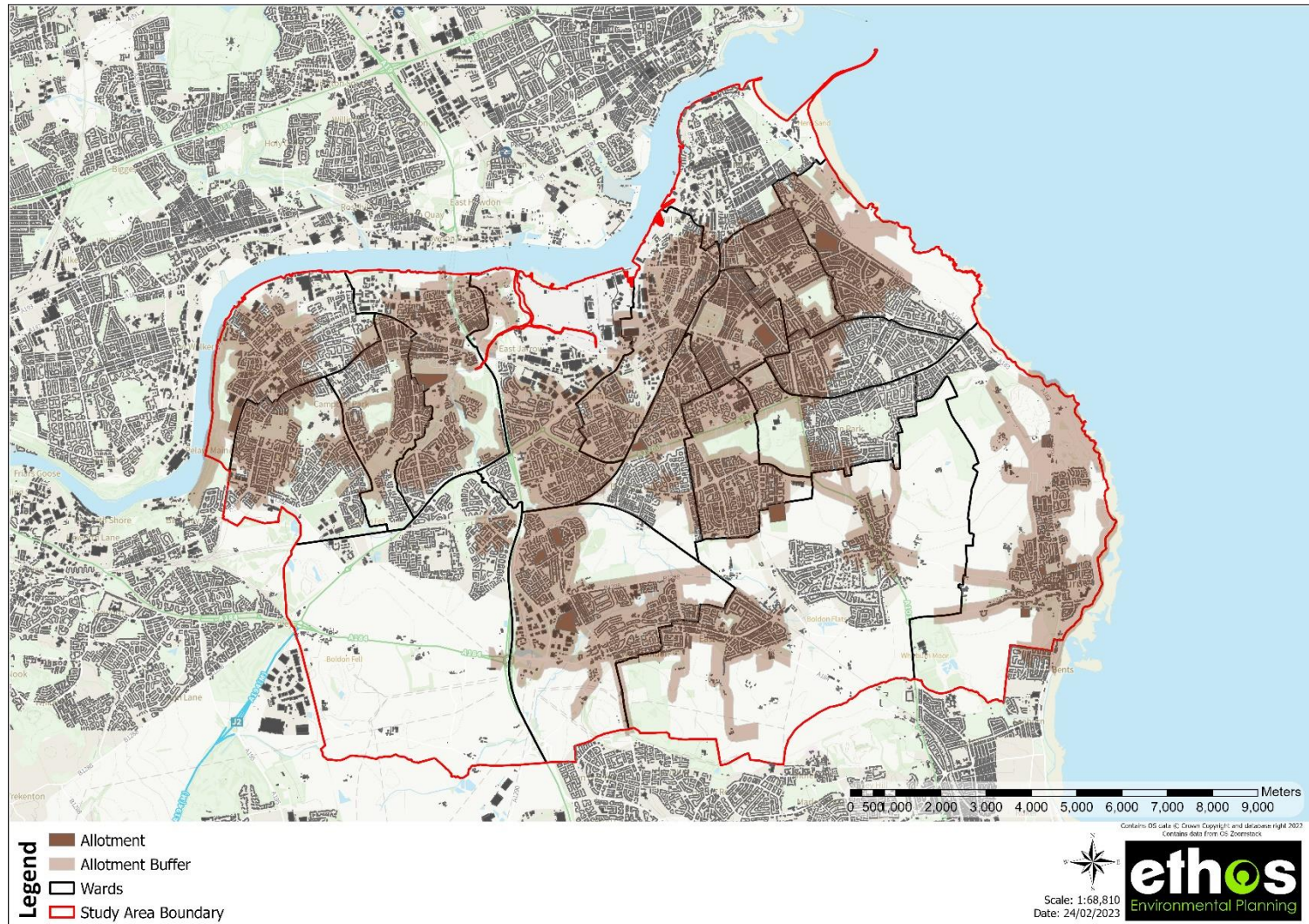


Figure 11 Access to allotments (15 minutes' walk time buffer)

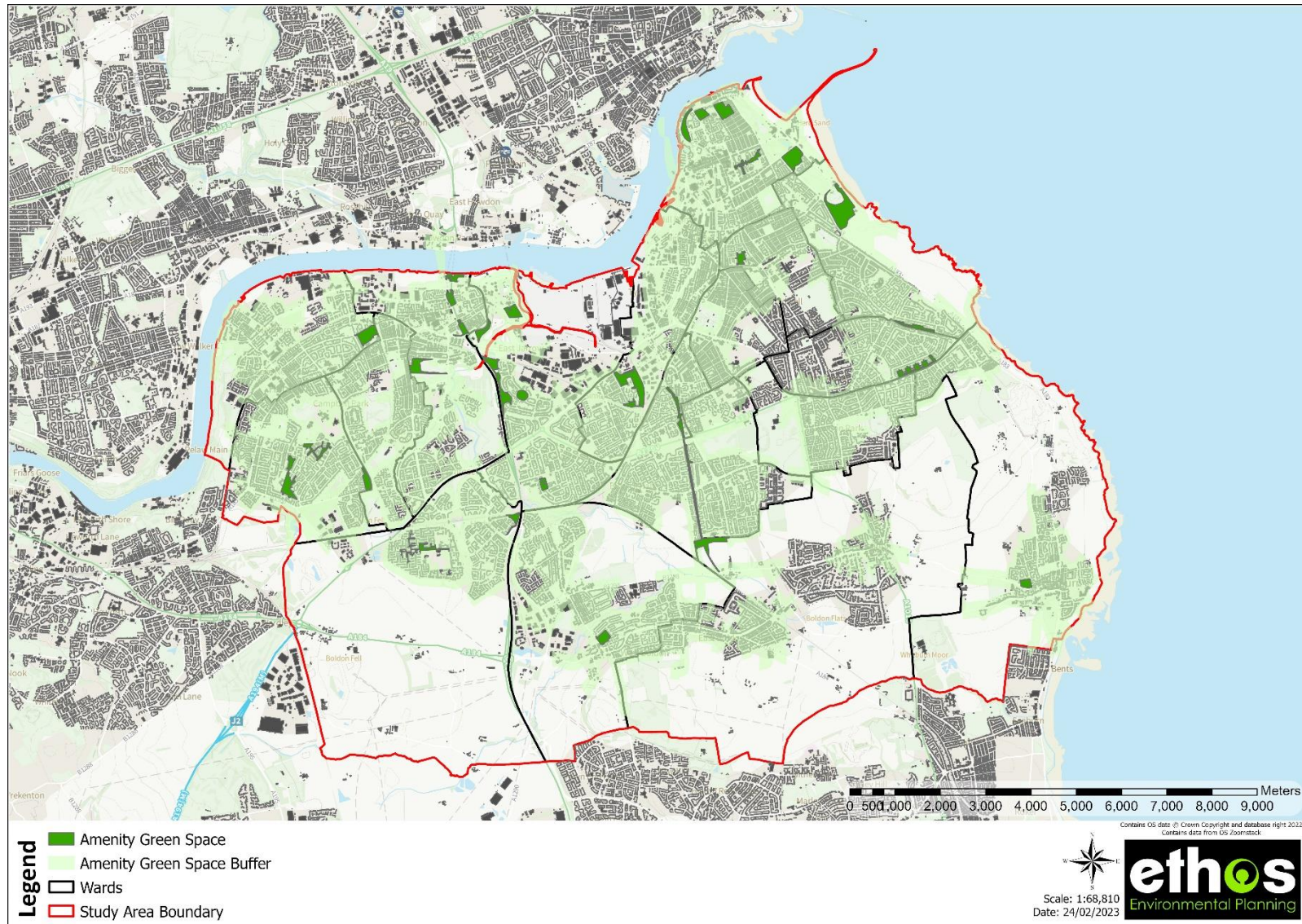


Figure 12 Access to amenity green space (10 minutes' walk time buffer)

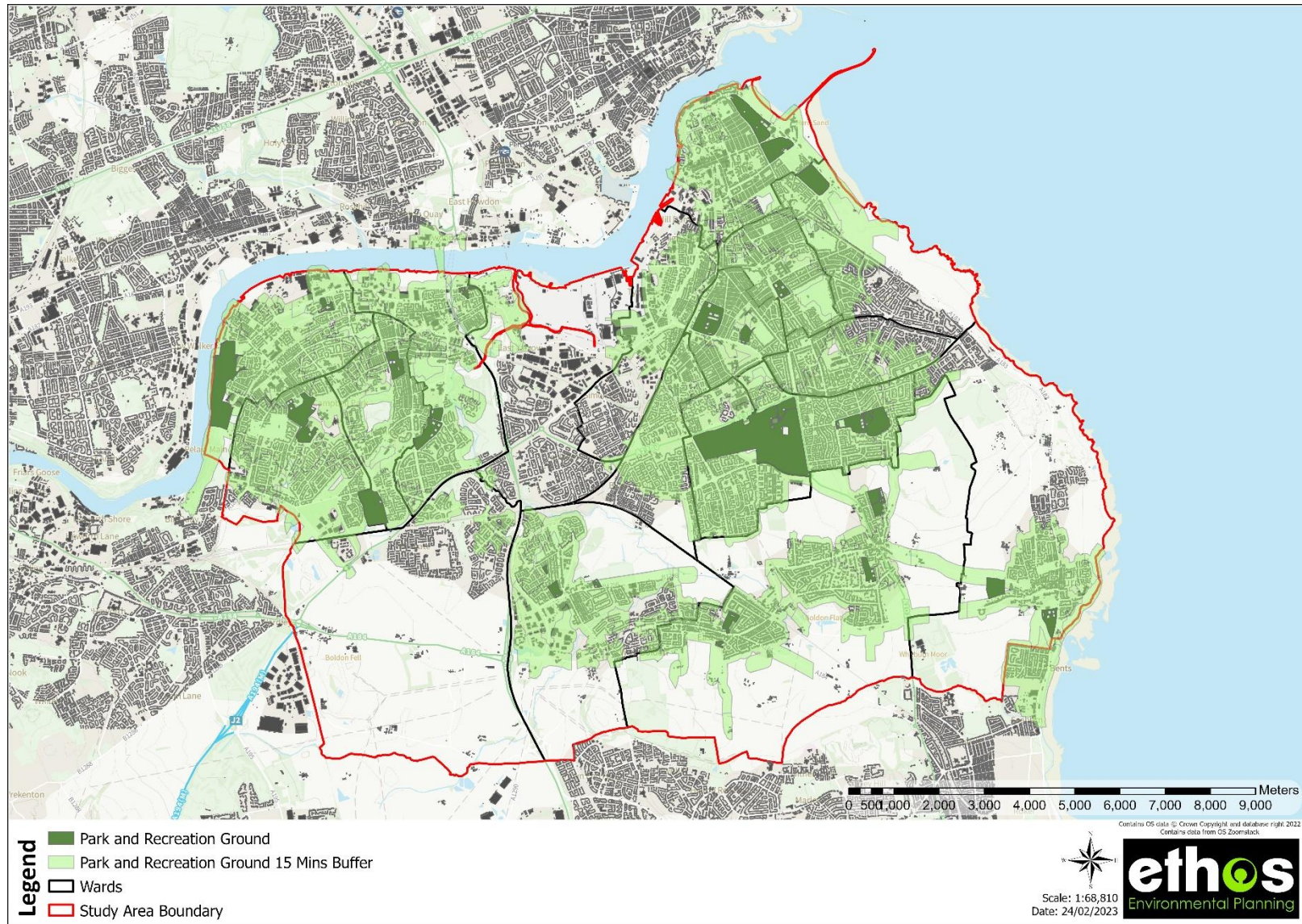


Figure 13 Access to parks and recreation grounds (15 minutes' walk time buffer)

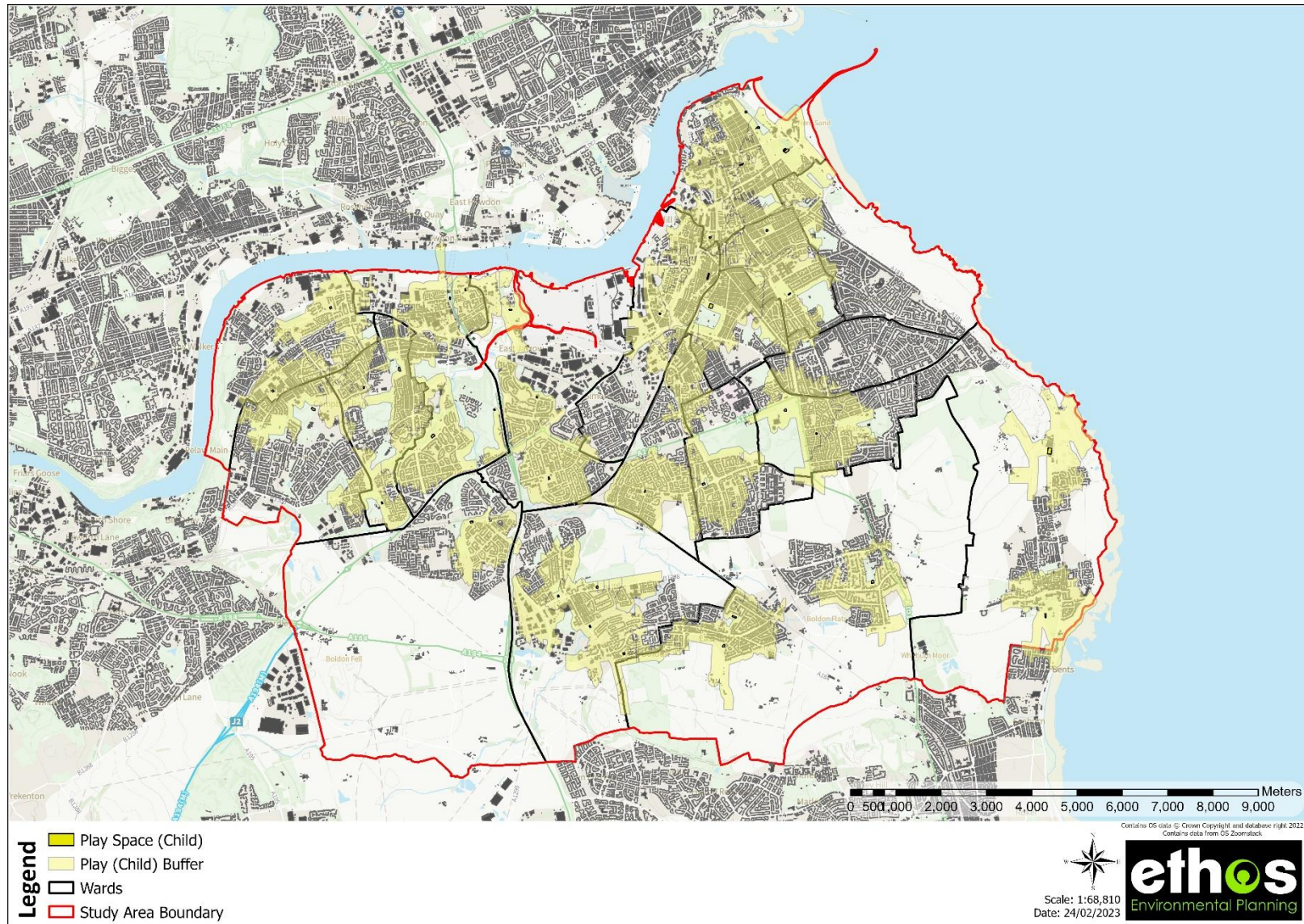


Figure 14 Access to children's play space (10 minutes' walk time buffer)

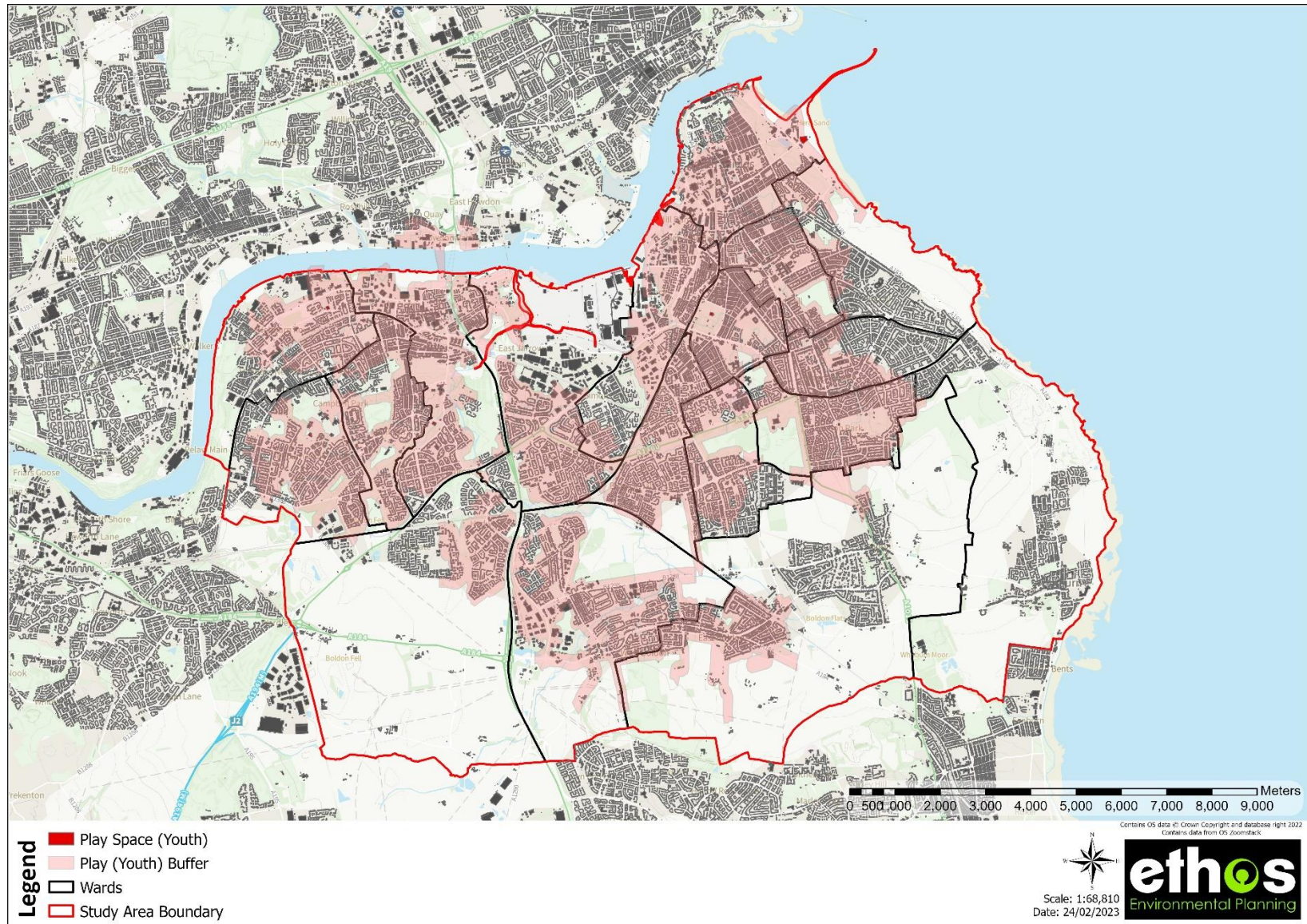


Figure 15 Access to youth play space (15 minutes' walk time buffer)

Table 19 Summary of access issues for allotments, amenity green space, parks and recreation grounds and play space (children and youth)

Typology	Key Access Issues
Allotments	There are some large gaps across several built-up areas of many wards, including Beacon and Bents, Horsley Hill, Harton, Cleadon, Biddick and All Saints, Fellgate and Hedworth, Hebburn South and Hebburn North.
Amenity Green Space	Generally good access across the study area, although there are some relatively large gaps around the border with Harton, Westoe and West Park, and also in Cleadon; and Whitburn and Marsden. However, there is good access to parks and recreation grounds in the areas, with the exception of the north of Whitburn.
Parks and Recreation Grounds	Largely good access across the majority of the study area, although there are some significant gaps in the east (Horsely Hill; Harton; and Whitburn and Marsden) and in the central area (Bede; Fellgate and Hedworth; and Simonside and Rekendyke).
Play Space (Children)	There are significant gaps across several built-up areas of wards, including Horsley Hill, Harton, Whitburn and Marsden, Cleadon Park, Whiteleas, Cleadon and East Boldon, Simonside and Rekendyke, Fellgate and Hedworth and Hebburn South.
Play Space (Youth)	There are significant gaps across several built-up areas of wards, including Horsley Hill, Harton, Cleadon, Fellgate and Hedworth, Simonside and Rekendyke, and no access in Whitburn and Marsden.

7.3.2 Access to accessible natural green space across the study area

This section looks at access to accessible natural/semi-natural green space within the study area, through the application of the locally derived access standard (see Figure 16), and the ANGSt standards, in order to identify the main gaps in access. As already mentioned under Section 5.2.5, this typology only includes those natural green spaces which have a definitive boundary and public access e.g., Local Nature Reserves, and not the open countryside where the only access is via the Public Right of Way network.

Temple Park (primary typology park and recreation ground – green polygon on the maps below) has been included within the access analysis for accessible natural green space in agreement with the project team, as a large part of the park consists of semi natural habitat.

Natural England Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGSt)

ANGSt recommends 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 1 hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population.
-

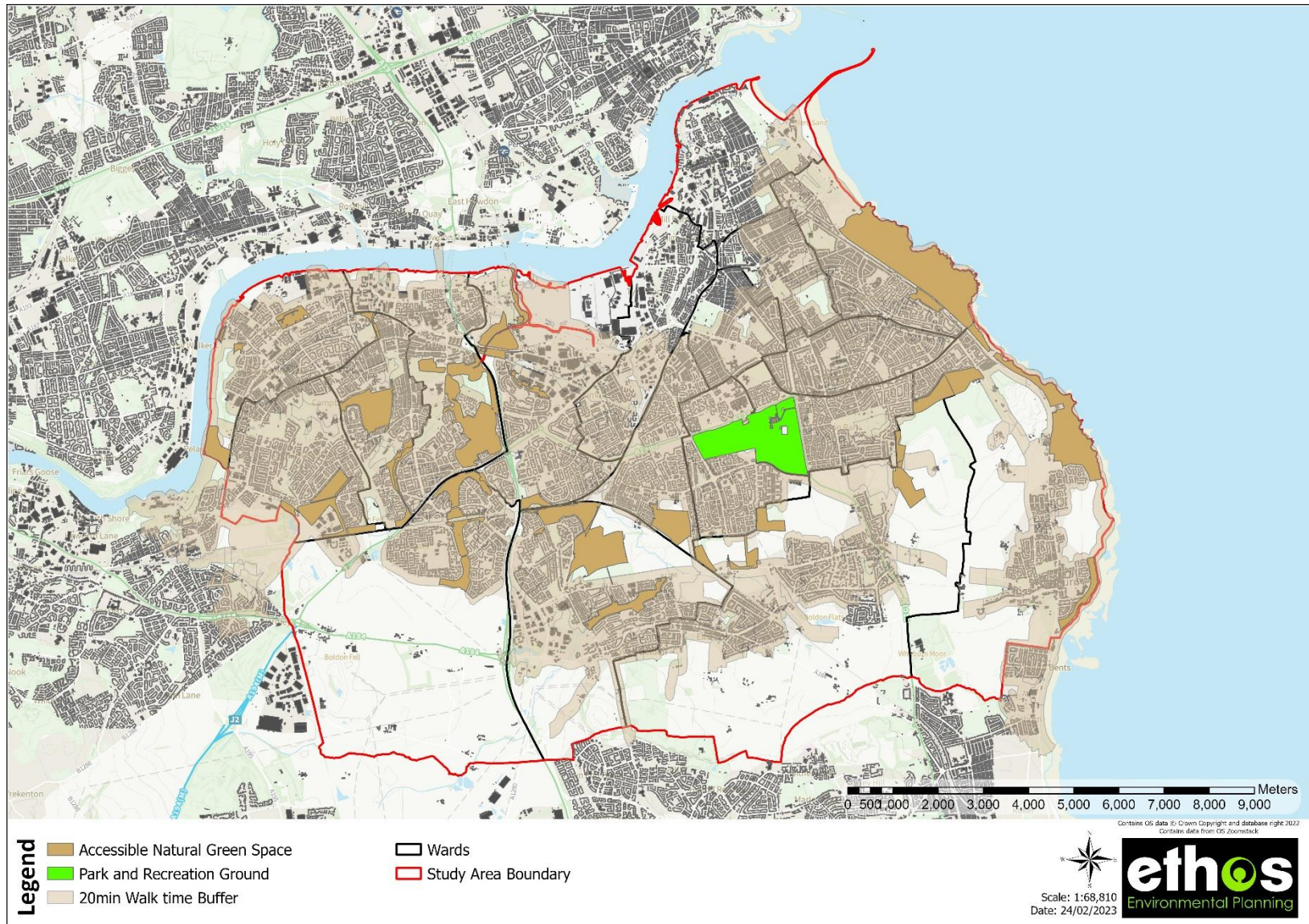


Figure 16 Access to accessible natural greenspace (20 minutes' walk time)

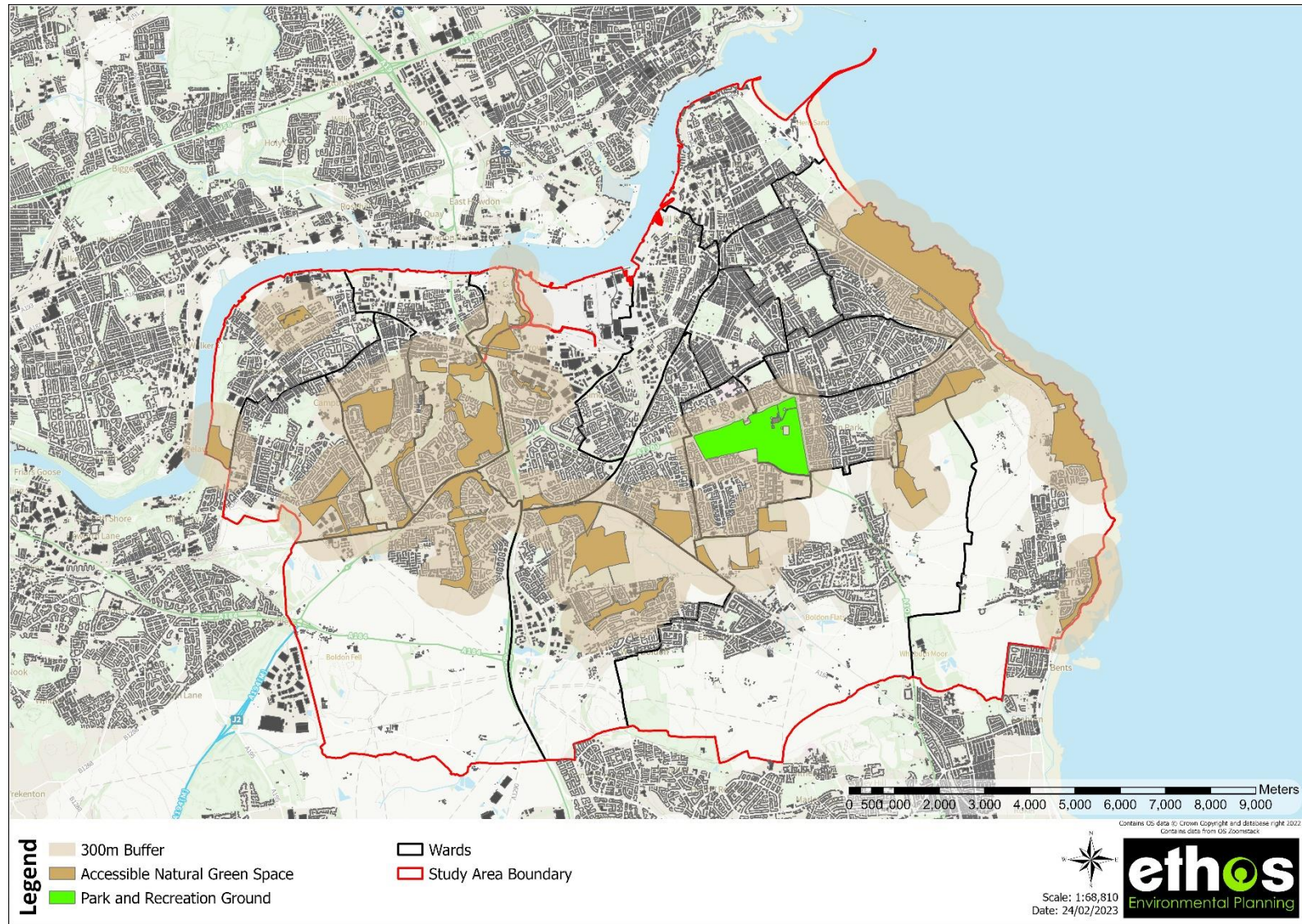


Figure 17 ANGSt Standard: Access to 2ha+ sites within 300m

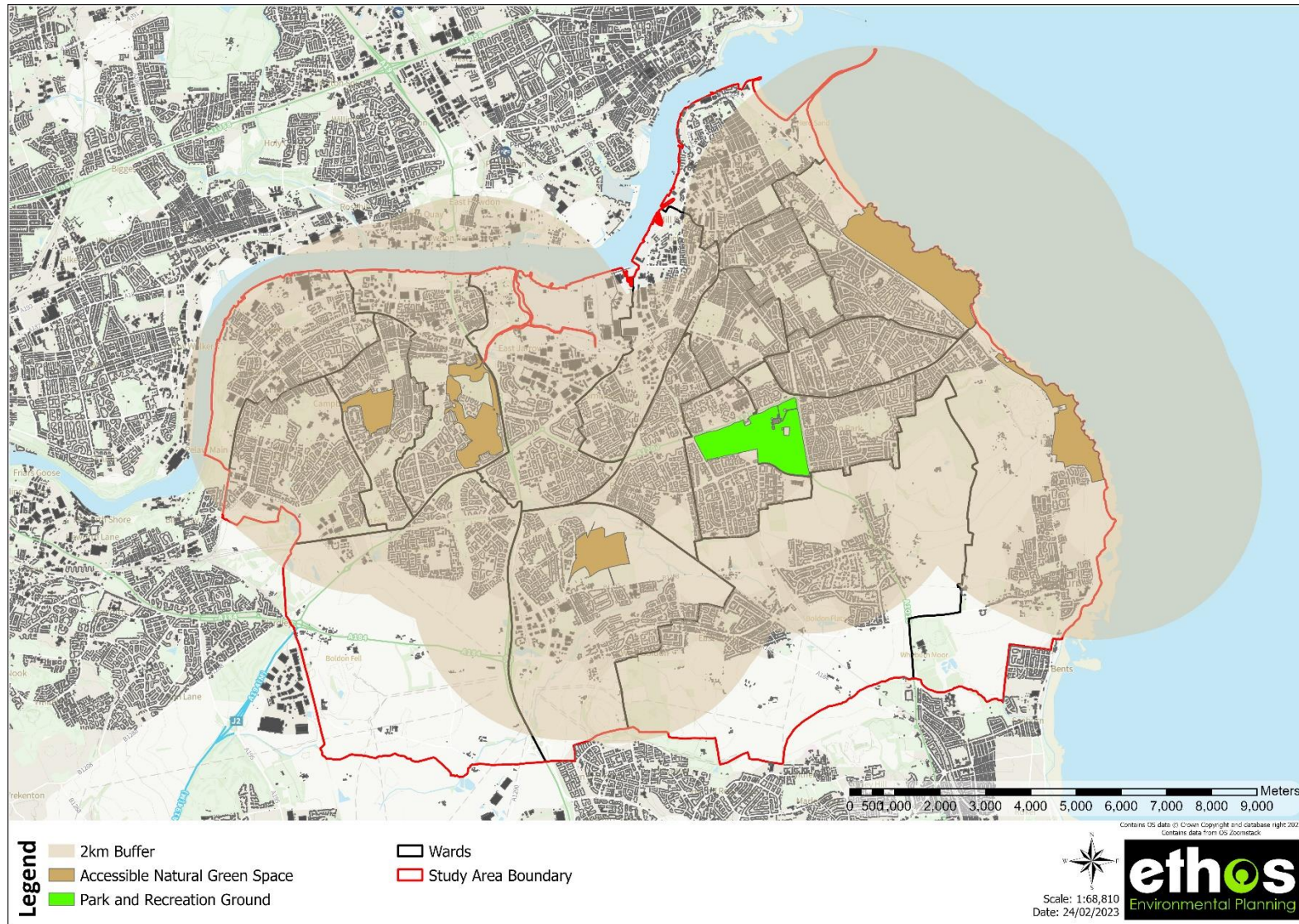


Figure 18 ANGSt Standard: Access to 20ha+ sites within 2km



Figure 19 Local Nature Reserves

Table 20 Summary of key access issues for accessible natural green space

Standard	Key access Issues
Access to accessible natural green space – 20 minutes’ walk time	Generally good access across the majority of the study area, although there are significant gaps across built-up in Beacon and Bents and Simonside and Rekendyke.
At least one accessible 2 hectare site, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes’ walk) from home	When applying this access standard, it can be seen that there are significant gaps in access across large parts of the study area. Therefore, it is considered that this standard is not very realistic or achievable within the study area, and the locally derived 20 minutes’ walk time buffer is more appropriate in identifying where the key access gaps are.
At least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home	Good access across the study area.
One accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home	There are no 100 ha sites mapped within/adjacent to the study area.
One accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home.	There are no 500 ha sites mapped within/adjacent to the study area.
A minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population	There are 7 (totaling 54.87ha in size) Local Nature Reserves (LNR’s) within the study area, which equates to 0.36ha per 1000 population. This falls below the ANGSt standard of 1ha/1000.

7.4 Application of quality standards

7.4.1 Quality of open space – community consultation key findings

Respondents were asked how they rated various types of facilities in the study area in terms of quality. The responses on specific categories of facility are illustrated in Figure 20 below.

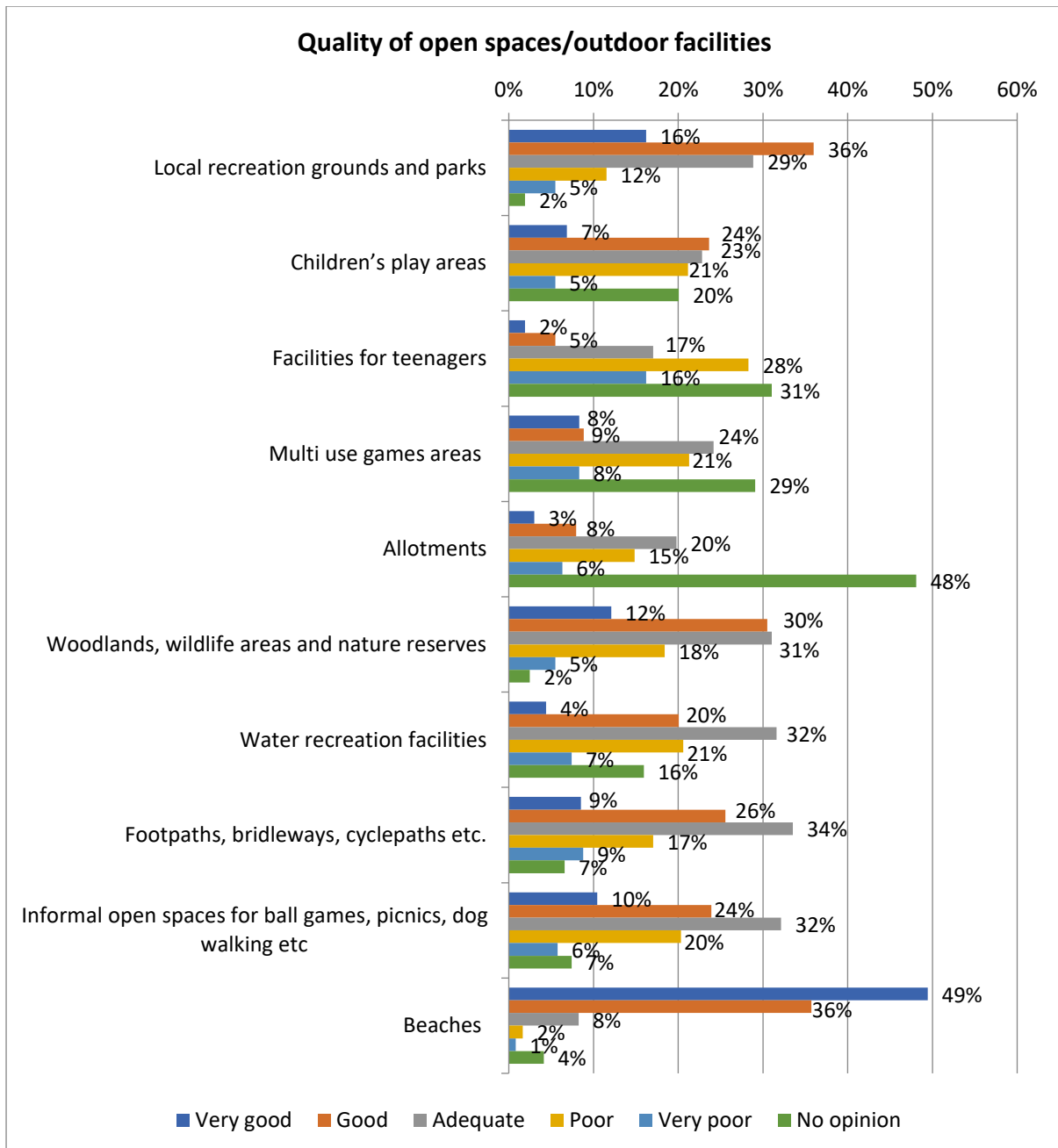


Figure 20 Quality of open space (responses from community consultation 2022)

Quality of open spaces were varied as to how they were rated by respondents. Beaches were the most highly rated in terms of quality with 85% of respondents either rating them as very good or good followed parks and recreation grounds (52%). The lowest rated provisions are facilities for teenagers with 44% rating them either as very poor or poor and 29% for multi-use games areas.

For most kinds of open spaces, the general weighting of respondent’s opinions was towards adequate and good, rather than adequate or poor. The main exception to this is provision for teenagers and multi-use games areas, where the weight of opinion was 22% adequate or good, against 45% adequate to poor (for provision for teenagers), and 33% adequate or good, against 45% adequate to poor (for multi-use games areas).

7.4.2 Quality of open space – audit methodology

The quality audits were undertaken using a standardised methodology and consistent approach. However, audits of this nature can only ever be a snapshot in time and their main purpose is to provide a consistent and objective assessment of a site’s existing quality rather than a full asset audit. Quality audits were undertaken at 181 open spaces in October 2022.

Sites were visited, and data captured using a phone/tablet with ArcGIS Field Maps and Survey 123. A photographic record was made of key features (geolocated within the GIS database), along with a description of the site and recommendations for improvements. An assessment of the quality of the open space was undertaken using the agreed criteria, set out in Table 22 below. These criteria are based on the Green Flag Award assessment.³⁰

Scoring

Table 21 Quality scoring line

Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Exceptional
0 -1	2, 3, 4	5, 6	7	8	9	10

Each of the 10 criteria below were scored between 1 (very poor) and 10 (exceptional), and there is also an N/A option for some of the criteria. The scores for each site are added together and the mean calculated based on how many criteria were scored (e.g., If ‘Appropriate signage and information’ is given N/A for a site, the total will be divided by 9). This mean is then multiplied by 10 to produce the percentage final score.

The final percentage score was used to group sites into categories (poor, fair, good excellent) based on the range of site scores (using equal intervals):

- Excellent ≥ 81%
- Good 66-80%
- Fair 45-65%
- Poor ≤ 45%

If a site scores fair, good or excellent overall but has particular issues e.g., scores poor (or 4 or below) for any particular criterion, this has been flagged up within the analysis.

Criteria

Table 22 Quality criteria for open spaces

Criteria	Considerations
1. Welcoming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is the main entrance well maintained, obvious and safe? ● Is the site managed/laid out so that there is an overall sense of welcome?
2. Good and safe access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are the paths clean and tidy?

³⁰ <https://www.greenflagaward.org/>

Criteria	Considerations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the paths accessible for mobility scooter/wheelchair users? • Are there good links to adjacent green spaces/community facilities?
<p>3. Appropriate signage and information</p> <p>(N.b. there is an N/A option for this criterion as not appropriate for all open spaces e.g., small amenities to have signage).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there clear and well-maintained signs/maps/information boards, which are appropriate to the site. • Is the site easy to find with directional signage where required?
<p>4. Appropriate Provision of Facilities</p> <p>(N.b. there is an N/A option for this criterion as not appropriate for all open spaces to have facilities).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there a range of good quality facilities which are appropriate to the site? • Do play spaces have good play value?
<p>5. Quality/Management of Facilities and Infrastructure</p> <p>(N.b. there is an N/A option for this criterion as not appropriate for all open spaces to have facilities).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is equipment fit-for-use and well-maintained and has redundant equipment been removed? • Is the infrastructure (paths, lighting, fencing, seating) and buildings (if present) well-maintained? • Are equipment and facilities safe and dangers/hazards cordoned off? • Do surfaces drain well?
<p>6. Maintenance of soft landscaping/ grounds maintenance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the grounds, horticultural areas and trees managed appropriately?
<p>7. Biodiversity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the site contribute positively to biodiversity through providing a diversity of habitats and features which are well managed and connected within the site?
<p>8. Personal Security on Site</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the site overlooked by housing? • Does it look like the site has a problem with anti-social behaviour (e.g., graffiti, dumping)? • Is there a feeling of personal safety?
<p>9. Dog fouling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are dog bins available and visible and is there dog fouling present?
<p>10. Litter and waste management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are bins/signs available and visible and is there a litter issue/fly tipping across the site?

7.4.3 Quality of open space – audit findings

The quality audit was undertaken at 181 open spaces across the study area. The details of the quality audits are contained within the GIS database provided to the council. For each of the wards within the study area, a map showing the results of the quality audit has been produced, showing the sites which scored excellent, good, fair or poor quality (see Appendix 3).

Figure 21 and Table 23 below provide an overview of the quality audit results across the study area.

The majority of open spaces (95 sites or 52%) were assessed as being of good quality overall, however 25 of these (26%) scored 4 or less (poor) for at least one criterion and may therefore still be a priority for improvement. A large proportion of sites were also assessed as being fair (68 sites or 38%), with the vast majority (52 sites or 76%) scoring poor for at least one criterion.

Key quality issues included fly tipping and litter, poor management of accessible natural green spaces, and children’s play areas having low play value.

Table 23 Overview of quality audit scores across the study area

Typology	Excellent	Good	Good with 1+ poor criterion	Fair	Fair with 1+ poor criterion	Poor
Accessible natural green space	2	17	2	1	7	2
Amenity Green Space	2	45	17	12	35	7
Parks and recreation ground	3	7	3	3	8	0
Play space (child)	1	0	2	0	1	0
Play space (youth)	0	1	1	0	1	1
Total	8	70	25	16	52	10

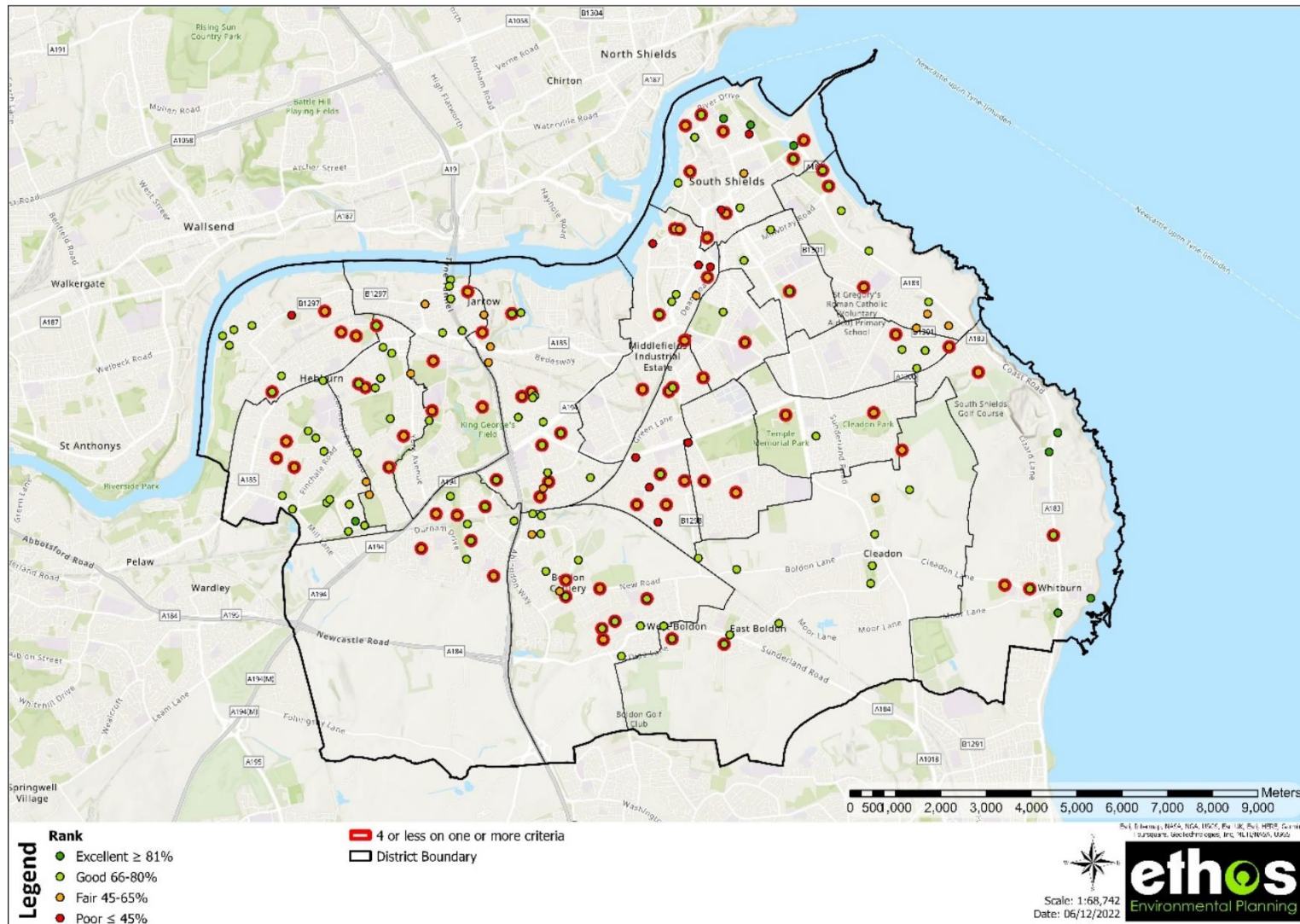


Figure 21 Overview of open space quality scores (October 2022)

8.0 STRATEGIC OPTIONS, POLICY & MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

This section sets out strategic options and policy recommendations for open space within the study area. It draws on all the previous steps of the study to bring together informed recommendations and addresses a number of specific requirements of the study brief.

8.1 Strategic Options

8.1.1 Introduction

The strategic options address six key areas:

- 1) Existing provision to be protected;
- 2) Existing provision to be enhanced;
- 3) Opportunities for re-location/re-designation of open space;
- 4) Identification of areas for new provision;
- 5) Facilities that may be surplus to requirement;
- 6) Developer contributions and recommended thresholds for on-site provision of open space

8.1.2 Delivering Strategic Options

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The planning system has three overarching objectives (economic, social and environmental), which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. Open spaces (provision, protection, enhancement) and their associated intrinsic benefits are key components of all three of the objectives.

Whilst local authorities have an important role in delivering open space, sport and recreation facilities (as do the private sector), in some cases their role may move from that of 'deliverer' to 'facilitator'. The aim will be to work with community organisations to make local decisions about how facilities and services will be provided. Organisations such as residents' groups, voluntary organisations, sports clubs and societies will all have a key role in this.

Although it is up to local communities to define their own priorities (such as through neighbourhood plans) the information provided within this study will form a good basis to inform any decisions related to the provision of open space.

The following sections consider the key issues for open space in the study area, and the recommendations that emerge need to be taken in context with national policy and legislation and consider how they can fit into local decision making. The following sections serve to highlight issues, but do not necessarily resolve how they may be delivered. The information provided within this study will also form the basis for potential future strategies. The recommended policies within this study can also be used to help form the basis of any open space policies within the review of the existing Local Plan.

8.2 Existing provision to be protected

The starting point of any policy adopted by the local authorities should be that all open space should be afforded protection unless, it can be demonstrated it is not required/is surplus to requirements (in accordance with the NPPF). Even where open spaces are in sufficient supply within a given area, this does not necessarily mean there is a ‘surplus’ in provision of open space, as additional factors such as access to open space, the supply of other typologies of open space, the quality of open space and where new development is planned needs to be taken into account (as explained further in the sections below and covered in section 7 of this report).

Existing open space or sport and recreation facilities which should be given the highest level of protection by the planning system are those which are either:

- Critically important in avoiding deficiencies in accessibility, quality or quantity and scored highly in the quality assessment; **or**
- Are of particular nature conservation, historical or cultural value.

The quantity analysis, summarised in Table 18 (Section 7.2) shows that in every ward, there is a deficiency in at least three typologies of open space. Therefore, the following recommendations are made:

Open Space Policy Direction (protecting open space):

OS1	The starting point is that all open space will be protected, unless it can be demonstrated that it is surplus to requirements. The distribution of open space varies across the study area, however, there are identified shortfalls of at least three typologies of open space in all wards, and in addition, gaps in access to open spaces. It is therefore recommended that priority is placed on protecting those open spaces where there are existing shortfalls against the quantity and/or access standards, and also those open spaces which have scored highly in the quality assessment.
OS2	Sites which are critical to avoiding deficiencies, or making deficiencies worse, in respect of quantity, quality or accessibility should be protected unless suitable alternative provision can be provided which would compensate for any deficiencies caused.
OS3	Sites which have significant nature conservation, historical or cultural value (or other functions contributing to the overall connectivity and functioning of the green and blue infrastructure network, such as water management) should be afforded protection, even if there is an identified surplus in quality, quantity or accessibility in that local area.

8.3 Existing provision to be enhanced

In areas where there is a quantitative deficiency of provision but no accessibility issues, then quantitative deficiencies could be met by increasing the capacity of existing facilities through quality improvements e.g., increasing the size and quality of a play area.

In areas where facilities or spaces do not meet the relevant quality standards, then enhancements will be sought. These can be delivered either through development where opportunities arise as above, or through other funding sources identified by the council.

This includes those spaces or facilities which:

- Are critically important in avoiding deficiencies in diversity, accessibility or quantity, **but**
- Scored poorly in the quality assessment.

Those sites which require enhancement are identified within the quality audit that was undertaken (although there may also be local priorities that have not been picked up as part of the quality audits). Some of the key observations related to site quality, functionality and enhancement include:

1. The importance of providing high quality provision and maintenance of formal facilities such as parks and recreation grounds and play space.
2. The need for additional and improved facilities for children and young people.
3. The need to ensure high quality open spaces which optimise multi-functionality are designed and provided through new development where feasible.
4. The importance of rights of way and accessible natural green space within the study area, and the need to maintain and enhance provision for biodiversity.
5. The role of open space in contributing to wider priorities such as biodiversity, health and wellbeing and climate change adaptation and mitigation.
6. The role of open space in extending and enhancing the network of green and blue infrastructure including the connectivity between sites and improved accessibility to existing sites.

Appendix 3 provides maps by ward showing the sites that were quality audited and their overall score (excellent, good, fair, poor), as identified within the quality audit database. An overview of the open space quality scores is provided in Section 7.4.3. The following recommendations are made in relation to the quality of open space:

Open Space Policy Direction (enhancing open space):

OS4	Where new housing development is proposed, and open space is not practicable on site, consideration should be given to improving existing open spaces within the ward or neighbouring ward to which the development is located. Priority should
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	be given to any sites identified as poor or fair as detailed in the quality audit database ³¹ .
OS5	New development should seek to follow best practice guidance e.g., the Building with Nature ³² Standards for high quality Green Infrastructure, in order to ensure that open space delivered through new development is multi-functional, climate resilient, future proof, responds to policy (local and national) and is appropriate to the landscape context/ contributes to sense of place.
OS6	The findings of the assessment make recommendations for improving the quality of open space across the study area. This should feed into new/updated strategies for achieving open space improvements.
OS7	The highest priorities for improvement (identified in the community survey 2022) include the enhancement of parks and recreation grounds; children’s play areas; footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths; and woodland, wildlife areas and nature reserves.
OS8	Management plans (if not already established) should be developed for the main parks and recreation grounds. These priorities could also be considered in neighbourhood plans and by the local community.

8.4 Opportunities for re-location/re-designation of open space

In some areas it may be possible to make better use of land by relocating an open space or sport and recreation facility, especially if this will enhance its quality or accessibility for existing users or use land which is not suitable for another purpose. This needs to be determined at a local level, considering the quality, quantity and access to facilities at neighbourhood level and in some cases across the study area.

Although it is up to local communities to define their own priorities within neighbourhood plans or management plans, the information provided within this study will form a good basis to inform any decisions related to the provision or replacement of open space, sport and recreation facilities. Some settlements may seek a consolidation of facilities on a single site, such as a new sports hub.

These decisions could include the spatial and investment plans for green space and set the foundations for green space provision (e.g., for the lifetime of a plan period). They should outline where different types of facilities and space - such as children's playgrounds, sports pitches, young people's facilities etc. are to be located. It will also identify if any open space

³¹ There may also be a demonstrated need to improve the quality of open spaces which were not included within the quality audits or those sites which were assessed as being good quality (e.g., where scoring poor against 1 or more criteria). There may be local aspirations for sites which have not been identified within the quality audits.

³² <https://www.buildingwithnature.org.uk/how-it-works>

is no longer needed and how its disposal or re use can be used to fund improvements to other spaces.

Spatial and Investment plans should apply the standards and be in accordance with the strategic policies set out in the adopted Local Plan (as informed by this study) and seek to ensure that where significant investment is anticipated for public open spaces that this is prioritised and realised with the help of key stakeholders and communities.

The standards recommended in this study can be used to help determine a minimum level of quality and quantity of green space provision and the maximum distance people should have to travel to access different types of green space.

This study provides information on the existing supply of different types of open space, an analysis of access and identifies local issues related to quality. It will act as a good starting point for feeding into strategies for future decision making in consultation with the local community.

Table 24 below provides an example of applying the supply, accessibility and quality of open space in the ward of Fellgate and Hedworth, in order to highlight potential opportunities for re-location or re-designation of open spaces or improvements to open spaces to help reduce existing shortfalls in quantity, accessibility and quality. It also considers those open spaces which may have potential to be considered as surplus to requirement. This is an example that could be used to guide South Tyneside Council in applying similar solutions to other wards as required.

These considerations will act as a good starting point for decision making but will require further detailed investigation and community consultation before any decisions can be made. For example, just because an open space may be in sufficient supply with overlaps in access, and it may be of fair or poor quality, local knowledge (or other considerations such as green infrastructure or historic value) may show that it is a highly valued and/or an important facility, and therefore it should not be considered for alternative use/as being surplus to requirement.

Table 24 Example of opportunities for re-location or redesignation of open space (or quality improvements) to reduce existing shortfalls

Ward	Current Open Space Provision	Opportunities
Fellgate and Hedworth	<p>Quantity: Overall shortfalls in supply of all types of open space with the exception of accessible natural green space.</p> <p>Access: Good access to amenity green space and accessible natural green space. Large gaps in access to allotments, parks and play space (child and youth).</p> <p>Quality: The quality of open space within the ward is fair to good. However, 6 out of 10 sites</p>	<p>Potential for accessible natural green space to accommodate low impact uses such as a community food growing (to reduce the shortfalls in allotments) and natural play (to reduce the shortfalls in children’s play space). Also potential for amenity green space to accommodate children’s and/or youth play space or community food growing. Consideration could also be given to community access at facilities within schools/education land.</p>

	assessed scored poor for at least one criterion.	Due to the shortfalls in supply across all typologies except accessible natural green space (ANGS), and the potential of ANGS to reduce existing shortfalls, (and the value of these spaces in terms of green infrastructure and biodiversity), it is recommended that no open spaces are considered as surplus to requirement. Alternative open space provision or quality improvements to existing spaces would be required to compensate for any unavoidable loss of open space (e.g., if it is an allocated site).
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8.5 Identification of areas for new provision

New provision will be required where there is a new development and a planned increase in population, and/or an existing deficiency in supply or access to facilities exists³³. Section 7 outlines the existing situation with regards to supply and access to open space. Neighbourhood plans would form a good mechanism to determine exactly where new provision is required, however, this study can be used as the basis for decision making, as follows:

Quantity

Within the study report, for each typology, there is an identified ‘sufficient supply’ or ‘under supply’ for each of the wards, as well as the overall study area. If a given geography has an existing under supply of any typology, there may be need for additional provision. This could be delivered through developing a new site (for example as part of a housing development), acquiring land to extend the site or changing the typology of an existing space (which may be in over supply).

The supply statistics should be used as part of the decision-making process in development management to determine if a new development should provide facilities on-site or enhance existing provision through developer contributions.

The use of the quantity statistics should not be in isolation and considered alongside the access standards.

Access

This study considers how access to different types of open space varies across the various geographies against the proposed standards. The maps in Section 7 (and Appendix 3) show where there are deficiencies and potential over supply of facilities. This information can be used alongside the quantity statistics to determine if new provision or improved accessibility

³³ In dense urban areas, where on site provision of open space in line with the standards is not feasible, the priority will be on improving the quality of and accessibility to existing open space. Green Infrastructure features such as green roofs and walls may have to act as a part proxy for the quantity of public open space (but these requirements would be dealt with elsewhere by other policy e.g., Green Infrastructure).

is required in an area. For example, if a new development is proposed, the maps should be consulted to determine if there is an existing gap in provision of a particular typology which could be met by the development.

Therefore, even though the quantity statistics may identify a sufficient supply of a particular typology, there may be gaps in access, and thus a new facility may still be required.

Delivering new provision

There are various opportunities for delivering new open space (and wider GI) through new development – developer contributions (CIL and S106), biodiversity net gain and to a lesser extent through capital and grant funding. Consideration could also be given to adopting an Urban Greening Factor.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The CIL is a tool for local authorities to help fund the delivery of infrastructure. CIL is a non-negotiable standard charge on new development. It takes the form of a charge per square metre of net additional floorspace and applies to most new development.

At the time of writing, South Tyneside Council uses Section 106 (S106) planning obligations to seek developer contributions and does not use the CIL.

Planning Obligations (S106)

‘Section 106’ planning obligations may be required for specific on-site mitigation measures and/or contributions towards off-site infrastructure, such as public open space provision. Any adverse impacts on the local environment or local infrastructure, which will arise as a direct result of development, and which can be made acceptable in planning terms, should be mitigated via a planning obligation. Planning obligations must be made in accordance with the three tests of CIL Regulation 122:

- necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- directly related to the development; and,
- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

The council publish details of financial and non-financial contributions in an Infrastructure Funding Statement. This statement must be published every year by 31 December.

New development will be required to provide on-site and/or off-site open space in accordance with South Tyneside Council policy requirements, as informed by the standards outlined in this study. Whilst not all developments will be of a size that will generate the requirement for on-site open space, when considering future requirements for South Tyneside, there will be many that will. This study should be used to inform local decisions about where and when new on-site provision will be required.

Figure 22 below shows an example flow chart/decision making process to help developers/council officers determine the need for on or off-site provision of open space. **This is only a guide and requirements will be determined on a case by case basis using the standards and assessment within this study. Where possible, this should be determined through pre-application discussions with the Council.**

Biodiversity net gain

Biodiversity Net Gain is an approach to development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before. Where a development has an impact on biodiversity it encourages developers to provide an increase in appropriate natural habitat and ecological features over and above that being affected in such a way it is hoped that the current loss of biodiversity through development will be halted and ecological networks can be restored.

Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain to compensate for loss of biodiversity through development is set to become a part of planning in late 2023 through requirements within the Environment Act 2021 which was ratified in November 2021. Once enacted, this will require any development under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (except Permitted Development and Householder Applications) to evidence a minimum 10% increase in biodiversity value, delivered through habitat creation or enhancement either on-site, off-site or through biodiversity credits, and 30 years management of those habitats. Further to this, BNG is supported within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which states that planning policies and decisions ‘should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.’

Capital and grant funding

Although the availability of capital and grant funding has diminished in recent years, nevertheless funding does become available for providing facilities for open space, sport and recreation. National and governing bodies for individual sports should be consulted where new infrastructure is required, such as changing rooms and sports pitches. Environmental grants and stewardship schemes are available for managing accessible natural green space. As neighbourhood plans are developed and open space priorities are established within these, funding requirements will be identified and delivery through grant funding can be considered.

The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) provide a summary of current opportunities to access funding for green infrastructure projects across the UK³⁴.

Urban Greening Factor

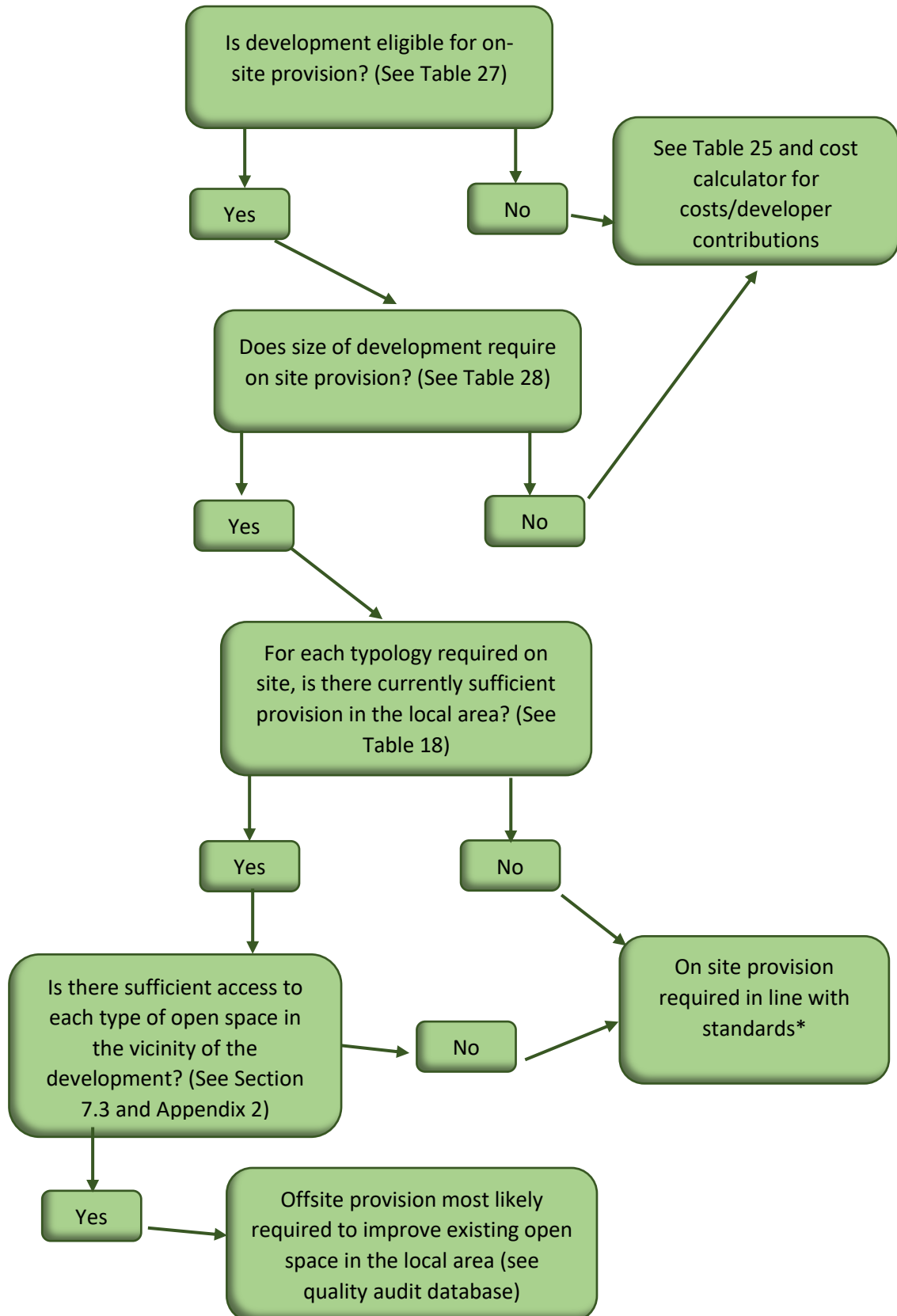
Urban greening factor (UGF) is likely to be advocated within the Natural England GI Standards Framework. UGF works well in higher density urban districts that generally struggle to significantly increase the quantum of green space but can benefit incrementally from the addition of greenery within development.

³⁴ [Funding sources for green infrastructure - Town and Country Planning Association \(tcpa.org.uk\)](https://www.tcpa.org.uk/funding-sources-for-green-infrastructure)

The London Plan 2021 includes the ‘Urban Greening Factor’. This is intended to accelerate the greening of London’s streets, buildings and public spaces. The policy will provide new areas of green space in the urban environment and to work alongside planning policies which protect existing green spaces. The policy encourages developers to approach urban greening as a fundamental element at the early stages so that opportunities to incorporate greening are maximised and integrated into the design process. To calculate the UGF, each surface type within a proposal is given a rating, these ratings vary between 0 and 1 depending on their contribution to greening. For example, an intensive green roof is rated 0.8, compared to permeable paving being rated 0.1. This rating is calculated against the total area and added together with all other surface types which results in a total site score. Typically, 0.3 is the minimum accepted rating although this varies depending on development type, for example a minimum rating of 0.4 is required for major residential developments.

Requirements for open space from new housing

Section 7.2 (Table 18) summarises the variation in supply of different typologies of open space across wards. As identified, every ward has a shortfall in at least three typologies of open space, therefore, the starting point for new housing (of a certain size - see Table 28 for recommended thresholds) is to assume that some form of on-site open space provision would be required.



*if it is not feasible to deliver open space on site due to exceptional circumstances e.g., viability or land availability, then potential to make off site provision will be considered on a case by case basis.

Figure 22 Decision making process for on-site provision of open space, or off-site contributions to enhance existing open space

Open Space Policy Direction (new provision of open space):**OS9**

New provision of open space will be required as part of new development. On-site provision should be provided in line with the proposed open space standards.

Where on-site provision is deemed impractical, or not required e.g., for small sites, consideration will be given to opportunities for off-site provision and/or improvements.

Improvements to existing open space will be considered first in the ward within which the development is located, then in open spaces in neighbouring wards. Open spaces requiring improvements will be identified using the results from the quality audit and also from site management plans and the Councils' own knowledge of their sites.

The Council could also consider the use of Urban Greening Factor (UGF) as part of Green Infrastructure Policy (this can work alongside Biodiversity Net Gain, especially on sites with low existing biodiversity value). UGF works well in higher density urban districts that generally struggle to significantly increase the quantum of green space but can benefit incrementally from the addition of greenery within development.

8.6 Facilities that are surplus to requirement

In addition to the strategic options outlined above, consideration should also be given to facilities that are surplus to requirement. There are important issues to resolve in terms of striking the correct balance of open space across the study area before any disposal can be contemplated. Whilst there is under provision relative to the minimum standards in several areas, there are other areas where provision compares favourably with the standards. However, it is once again emphasised that the proposed standards are for *minimum* levels of provision. Factors to be taken into account before any decision to release open space for alternative uses can be taken include:

- The local value and use of a given open space - as it may be a locally popular resource.
- Whether future local development/population growth might generate additional demands for open space.
- Whether there is a demonstrable need for some other type of open space within the locality that a given space (subject to a change of management regime) would be well placed to meet.
- Other non-recreational reasons that suggest a space should be retained (which might include ecological and visual reasons).

Figure 23 and the associated paragraphs below suggests an outline of the decision process that should be followed before the development/alternative use of an open space can be seriously contemplated. This is unlikely to be a consideration in South Tyneside, due to the shortfalls in supply of open space across the study area.

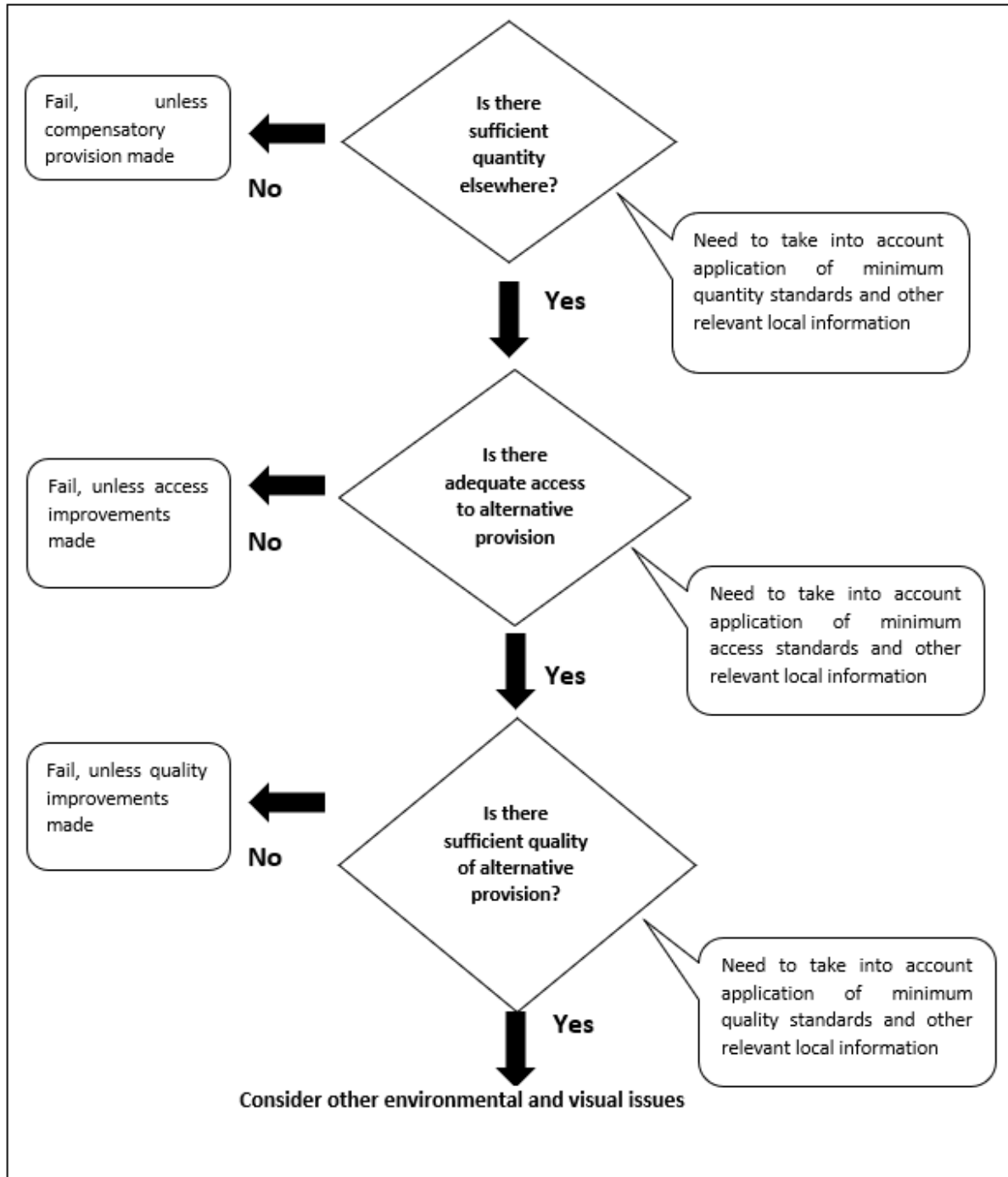


Figure 23 Outline decision making process in relation to sanctioning (re)development of open space

A hypothetical example of how this might be applied follows and relates to an area of amenity open space.

Q. Is there sufficient quantity?

A. If the minimum quantitative standard for amenity green space is exceeded in a defined geographical area, the relative provision of other forms of open space must then be considered (amenity green space can in principle be converted into other forms of open space where the need arises). If a) provision meets the minimum quantitative standard; b) there is

no significant local information suggesting a need to retain the site; and, c) there is not a perceived lack of other forms of open space, the next question can be addressed.

Q. Is there adequate access to alternative provision?

A. Within a given geographical area there may be good overall provision of amenity green space relative to the quantity standard, but is it in the right place and can it be easily reached? Applying the accessibility component of the minimum standards will help to answer this question. If other similar open space cannot be easily reached, the site's disposal for other uses may be unacceptable.

Q. Are other accessible and similar opportunities elsewhere of sufficient quality?

A. If it can be demonstrated that alternative opportunities are sufficient both in quantity and accessibility, there may still exist issues with the quality of these alternative provisions. The quality component of the proposed standards may indicate that certain improvements to alternative opportunities must be made which should be funded and secured before development is permitted.

The quality audit provided as part of this study provides a useful framework for identifying and prioritising open spaces that require improvements. Those open spaces which have been assessed as being of poor or average quality should be prioritised for improvement. If existing open spaces in the vicinity of new development are of poor/average quality, then their improvement (e.g., access improvements, signage, improvements to facilities and/or habitats) would need to be secured before any 'surplus' in a particular open space typology could be considered.

Even if these three tests are passed there may be other reasons for the site to remain as open space. For example, it may have value as a natural habitat or be visually important. Such considerations are important, but beyond the scope of this report.

8.7 Developer Contributions

This section draws on the policy recommendations in the previous section and outlines a process for calculating S106 developer contributions for on and off-site provision.

1) *Capital cost of providing open space (on and off site).*

In order to calculate developer contributions for facilities, a methodology has been recommended which calculates how much it would cost the Local Authority to provide them. These costs have been calculated by Ethos Environmental Planning using Spon's³⁵. A summary of the costs is outlined in Table 25 below. These costs are indicative and may be reviewed and updated by the Local Authority with localised information/costings from other sources.

Contributions towards the provision or improvement of open space are calculated using the capital cost of provision. The same charges apply to both provision of new facilities and the upgrading/improvement of existing facilities (where related to new development), which will normally include at least some new provision. Contribution per person is taken to be a reasonable approach to calculating the amount of money required and is an accepted approach used by many local authorities, irrespective of whether new provision or improvement of existing facilities is required. It ensures contributions are “in scale” as required by the CIL Regulations. The calculated costs have drawn on the standards of provision summarised in Section 6.7, Table 17.

Table 25 Costs for providing open space (excludes land costs)

Typology	Standard (m ²) per person (see Table 15)	Cost of provision	
		Cost / m ²	Contribution per person
Allotments	3.5	£34.20	£119.70
Parks and Recreation grounds (Combined) ³⁶	14.0	£116.53	£1,631.42
Play Space (Children)	1.0	£149.91	£149.91
Play Space (Youth)	1.0	£163.30	£163.30
Amenity green space	8.0	£16.40	£131.20
Natural green space	10.0	£6.20	£62.00
Total	37.5		£2,257.53

³⁵ Spon's Architects' and Builders' Price Book 2021

³⁶ The cost of provision for parks and recreation grounds does not include the cost of providing playing pitches or fixed facilities such as tennis and bowls, which are additional costs which would need to be agreed in addition to the open space costs, where new pitches or contributions to existing pitches are required. Sport England also set out facilities costs: <https://www.sportengland.org/media/13346/facility-costs-q2-18.pdf>.

This shows that it costs £2,257.53 per person to provide new open space to meet the South Tyneside standards for open space if contributions are sought for all typologies. These calculations may be used to calculate developer contributions for on-site provision and where required, for off-site contributions. Costs should be updated at least annually to account for inflation based on the Bank of England inflation rate (“Index Linking”).

Viability issues will be taken into account when considering the off-site contributions that would be required, on a case by case basis. It is acknowledged that in South Tyneside, it may not be viable for developers to meet the full costs (e.g., for parks and recreation grounds, which is the highest per person cost), but that a lower contribution towards enhancement of existing facilities is appropriate.

A **cost calculator** has been provided to the council so that the on and off-site requirements for open space can be calculated for different sized developments. This cost calculator is a recommendation by Ethos that might be further developed by the council, taking into account overall development viability in different parts of the study area. It provides an example of how costs might be calculated, but site circumstances will also need to be taken into account such as topography, or proximity to existing open space.

The cost calculator is based on the following assumptions:

- Average household size (2.4 persons/household³⁷)
- The open space quantity standards (see Table 17)
- The cost of open space per m² (see Table 25)
- Thresholds for on-site provision (see Table 28)

Cost calculator: Example

A housing development of 80 dwellings in would generate the following minimum requirements for on-site provision of open space and contributions for off-site improvements:

On-site provision:

- 0.1536 ha (1536 sqm) of amenity green space
- 0.1920 ha (1920 sqm) of accessible natural green space
- 0.0192 ha (192 sqm) of children’s play space

Contributions for off-site provision/improvements required³⁸:

- £22,982 for allotments
- £313,233 for parks and recreation grounds
- £31,354 for youth play space

³⁷ Based on Census 2021.

³⁸ Viability issues will be taken into account when considering the off-site contributions that would be required, on a case by case basis.

A screenshot from the cost calculator is provided below:

Number of dwellings	Enter number	Equivalent people	Open Space requirement	Required msq per person	Cost per msq	Total requirement (msq)	Cost of provision (£)	On site required?	Required quantity on site (msq)	Enter actual provision on site (msq)	Value of provision	Contribution required	Commuted sum required	Annual commuted sum (£)
1 bed		0	Allotments	3.5	34.20	672.00	£22,982	0	None	0	0	£22,982	0	0
2 bed		0	Amenity Green Space	8	16.40	1,536.00	£25,190	Y	1,536	1536	25,190	£0	Y	1182.72
3 bed		0	Parks & Recreation Grounds	14	116.53	2,688.00	£313,233	0	None	0	0	£313,233	0	0
4 bed		0	Play Space (Children)	1	149.91	192.00	£28,783	Y	192	192	28,783	£0	Y	2561.28
5 bed		0	Play Space (Youth)	1	163.30	192.00	£31,354	0	None	0	0	£31,354	0	0
Elderley 1 bed		0	Natural Green Space	10	6.20	1,920.00	£11,904	Y	1,920	1920	11,904	£0	Y	1478.4
Elderley 2 bed		0												
TOTAL	80	192		37.50		7,200	£433,446		3,648		65,877	£367,569		5222.4

2) Maintenance contributions (commuted sums) for on-site provision

Where new open space is provided, the developer would be expected to provide the open space and either maintain the open space through a management company, or if, the site is to be adopted by the Local Authority, then maintenance fees will be included in the Section 106 legal agreement. If the open space is maintained by a Management Company, then the open space should be publicly accessible in perpetuity. It is expected that a management plan for the open space would be submitted and approved by the council as a planning condition or part of the legal agreement. Details of how the Management Company will be established and managed, and the provisions put in place should the management company fail etc. would also need to be approved by the council.

In the event that the open space would be adopted by the council, they may be willing to accept a commuted sum and make arrangements for management of the open space. The amount payable for the commuted sum may be calculated using the figures in Table 26 below. These figures do not include professional fees, set up costs and admin etc. The figures provide guidance on how much it costs to maintain open space per metre squared. The costs have been provided from maintenance costs estimated by Ethos Environmental Planning using Spon's 2020³⁹, and include lifecycle replacement costs. An inflation rate based on the Bank of England inflation rate should be applied. As with the capital costs, these costs may be reviewed and updated by the council.

Table 26 Maintenance costs for open space

Typology	Cost/sq. m per annum
Play Space (Children)	£13.34
Play Space (Youth)	£9.21
Parks and Recreation Grounds ⁴⁰	£3.47
Amenity Green Space	£0.77
Allotments	£0.76

³⁹ Spon's Architects' and Builders' Price Book 2020.

⁴⁰ Excludes pitches/sports facilities - Sport England have published information on sports capital and maintenance costs: <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/facility-cost-guidance>

3) Eligible types of development for on-site provision

Table 27 outlines the type of housing that will be considered eligible for making contributions towards open space to meet the needs of future occupants.

Table 27 Eligible types of residential development

Category	Open Market Housing / Flats	Affordable Housing	Older People's Accommodation	Permanent mobile homes
Play Space (Children and Youth)	✓	✓	x	✓
Parks and Recreation Grounds	✓	✓	On a case by case basis	✓
Amenity Open Space	✓	✓	On a case by case basis	✓
Accessible Natural Green Space	✓	✓	On a case by case basis	✓
Allotments	✓	✓	On a case by case basis	✓

4) Thresholds for provision

The required open space should in the first instance be provided on-site, with off-site provision/contributions only to be considered where on-site provision is either not needed (considering the analysis of supply, accessibility) or not possible/practicable.

Where facilities are to be provided on-site, the council will expect the developer to provide the land for the facility and either:

- Design and build the provision to the satisfaction of the council; or
- Make a financial contribution the council so that they may arrange for the construction and development of the required facility.

The decision on whether facility provision is to be on-site, off-site or both depends on the following considerations⁴¹:

- The scale of the proposed development and site area;
- The suitability of a site reflecting, for example, its topography or flood risk;
- The existing provision of facilities within the ward/neighbourhood;
- Other sites in the ward/neighbourhood where additional provision is proposed; and
- Existing access to facilities within the ward/neighbourhood.

⁴¹ Also see flow chart at Figure 22.

Table 28 provides guidance on how to assess different scales of development sites that could generate a need for facilities in the categories listed to be provided on-site (also see the flow chart at Figure 22, which shows how the quantity, access and quality analysis needs to be taken into account. Where a development is of a size that could generate the need for provision of open space on-site, if there is sufficient provision (quantity and access) of an open space typology within the vicinity, then consideration will be given to improving existing facilities as an alternative to new on-site provision.

Where a development would result in less than 0.1ha of amenity green space, it will be provided as a single space. For developments that result in more than 0.1ha of amenity green space, the minimum size considered acceptable is 0.1ha. This will avoid a proliferation of small amenity spaces which have no real recreation function.

While Table 28 acts as a useful guide to the recommended types of provision in relation to the size of a scheme, each proposal will still be considered on a site by site basis, with on-site provision always to be considered as the first solution. The table below will be most applicable to greenfield sites. For high density brownfield sites, off-site contributions rather than on-site open space provision are considered to be reasonable, due to the limited land available for new development within the study area. The enhancement of existing facilities (including improving access to facilities) will be key to meeting unmet demand.

Table 28 Potential open space requirements based on scheme size

Type of Provision	5-19 dwellings	20-49 dwellings	50-99 dwellings	100+ dwellings
Allotments	X	X	X	✓
Amenity Green Space	X	✓	✓	✓
Parks and Recreation Grounds	X	X	X	✓
Play Space (children)	X	X	✓	✓
Play Space (Youth)	X	X	X	✓
Accessible natural green space	X	✓	✓	✓

KEY: ✓ on-site provision normally sought
 X off-site provision/improvements to existing open space normally required

9.0 CONCLUSION

This study provides a robust analysis of the status of open space within South Tyneside as of October 2022. It includes an audit of provision and a local needs assessment (consultation) with findings used to produce new recommended standards for quantity, accessibility and quality of open space. The study also includes a suite of policy recommendations and methodologies for interpreting and informing the needs for the assessed open space typologies over a period up to 2039, as well as a process for calculating developer contributions. It should be read in conjunction with the South Tyneside Council Consultation Report (2022).

The role and value of open space in contributing to the delivery of national and local priorities and targets, including climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity and health and wellbeing, is clear from this assessment. It is important that the policies and recommendations included within this assessment are considered for inclusion as statutory planning policy, associated guidance and other council strategies and policy documents.

Council officers and elected members play a pivotal role in adopting and promoting the recommendations within this assessment and ensuring that key stakeholders such as councillors, developers and community groups are suitably informed and engaged in the open space process.

Summary of key priorities

Key priorities identified within the study are as follows, and these should form the basis of a more detailed action plan:

Quantity: Across the study area, there are shortfalls in allotments, amenity green space, and play space (children and youth). The picture varies by ward, but there are shortfalls in the supply of children's and youth play space in every ward. Therefore, the priority is protecting and enhancing these spaces, and securing opportunities for new provision.

At the study area level there is good provision of parks and recreation grounds and accessible natural green space, although there are shortfalls in supply in a number of wards, and also gaps in access. Therefore, in general the priority will be to protect and enhance existing provision of parks and accessible natural green space, however, new provision may be required where deficiencies in access can be reduced/removed. There may also be the opportunity to upgrade existing large amenity green spaces to parks and recreation grounds, in order to reduce gaps in access to parks and shortfalls in other types of open space such as children's and youth provision.

Consolidation of spaces could be considered in consultation with the community, where there are overlaps in access, and opportunities to expand and improve key sites, to avoid worsening existing deficiencies.

Quality: The assessment has found that the quality of open space varies across the borough, with key quality issues including fly tipping and litter, poor management of accessible natural green spaces, and children’s play areas having low play value.

The majority of open spaces were assessed as either good or fair quality, however a significant proportion of these sites scored poorly for at least one criterion, meaning that there are quality issues that need addressing. This means that improving the quality of existing open spaces is a key priority for South Tyneside. This will also help meet wider priorities around health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities (also see Section 3.3.3) and can contribute to biodiversity and climate mitigation/adaptation.

Access: Access to open space also varies across the study area and by wards. There is relatively good access to amenity green space across the study area, but there are significant gaps in access to allotments, parks and recreation grounds, play space (children and youth) and accessible natural green space.

Delivering open space improvements

New development that is well designed and follows good practice (such as the Building with Nature benchmark for high quality green infrastructure) can play a positive role in the protection, provision and enhancement of high quality open space which provides multiple benefits for people and nature, as part of a wider green infrastructure network within the borough (and beyond).

Outside of development, the council and other open space providers (such as parish and town council’s) play a key role in high quality open space provision, through strong planning policy in the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans, and also site management that follows best practice and optimises the benefits for people and wildlife.

Despite the demonstrated benefits of high quality parks and open spaces, funding for the management and enhancement of open space is a key issue, in light of continued budget cuts. The council could therefore consider developing a parks and open space strategy which could look at prioritising site investment, alongside exploring different funding options, models and mechanisms for securing open space into the long term. The value and benefits provided by open space and green infrastructure to society, the environment and the economy are becoming increasingly recognised, and are now central to UK government policy. This is resulting in increasing funding/resource opportunities.

The assessment has also recommended that management plans are developed for key open spaces including parks and accessible natural green spaces. These should be developed through engaging with local communities to help ensure that local needs are met, and help make them safe, welcoming, inclusive, wildlife friendly and climate resilient spaces for the whole community to enjoy and benefit from.
