Newcastle
Open Space Assessment

Newcastle
City Council

2016 – 2030

(AUGUST 2018 UPDATE)
Newcastle Open Space Assessment

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANGST</td>
<td>Accessible Natural Green Space Standard</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIL</td>
<td>Community Infrastructure Levy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPD</td>
<td>Development Plan Document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIT</td>
<td>Fields In Trust (originally known as the 'National Playing Fields Association')</td>
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<tr>
<td>GI</td>
<td>Green Infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td>GIST</td>
<td>Green Infrastructure Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>GIS</td>
<td>Geographic Information Systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAP</td>
<td>Local Area for Play</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEAP</td>
<td>Local Equipped Area for Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUGA</td>
<td>Multi Use Games Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEAP</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Equipped Play Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEWP</td>
<td>Natural Environment White Paper</td>
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<td>NGB</td>
<td>National Governing Body</td>
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<td>NPPF</td>
<td>National Planning Policy Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPG17</td>
<td>Planning Policy Guidance Note 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPD</td>
<td>Supplementary Planning Document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPS</td>
<td>Planning Policy Statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>WASt</td>
<td>Woodland Access Standard</td>
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This Open Space Study has been undertaken by Ethos Environmental Planning to inform the preparation of Part 2 of the Local Plan, the Development and Allocations Plan and the Council’s decision making process in relation to open space provision up to 2030.

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.

The study has been carried out in-line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Open space 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 (it does signpost the Sport England guidance for sports facilities assessments1), 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.

It should be noted that this study provides an evidence base for planning policy, and is not a strategy document. The recommendations (Section 8) of this assessment include the basis for the formulation of policies related to open space that will be included within the local plan.

1.2 Scope of Study and Objectives

1.2.1 Overall Aim of the Study

The aims of the study are to provide a robust assessment of needs and deficiencies in open spaces in order to establish local provision standards and create an up to date evidence base which can be used to inform the emerging Development and Allocations Plan. The standards will be used to assess proposals for open spaces during the Local Plan period, recognising the need for improving the quality of existing open spaces in addition to requiring new provision.

1.2.2 Scope of Study and Objectives

The study will provide the council with up to date information on green space location, coverage and provision. It will provide a comprehensive assessment of the current level of provision of the different types of green space, informal children’s play spaces, allotments, and woodland and nature conservation areas.

Built/indoor facilities and outdoor sports and playing pitches (including informal sports pitches) are covered in two separate reports:

- Plan for Built Facilities (adopted October 2015)
- Plan for Playing Pitches (adopted October 2015)

The brief for the study highlighted that the overall objectives are:

- Identify and update all green space, sport and recreational facilities providing the evidence to create a new open space policy layer for the Local Plan policies map
- Establish and agree quantity standards and accessibility isochrones (buffers) for each relevant green space category
- Create a GIS map layer showing the accessibility buffers
- Identify deficient areas based on agreed quantity standards
- Produce a summary of green space provision for areas (to be defined)
- Ensure green space is accounted for in the DALDD
- Provide the evidence base to enable scoping the proposals for green space (GI) contributions from new development
- Produce evidence base document for the assessment and rationalising open space policy
- Provide a comprehensive evidence base identifying green space provision to support decision making on open space improvement for various sections of the council

1.3 Structure of the report

The open space study follows the 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 of Newcastle

Straddling the north bank of the River Tyne, Newcastle City is one of the most dramatic and memorable of any major place in England and is at the heart of the North East. Predominantly urbanised, Newcastle City grew up around the long established bridging-point where the Tyne was crossed by the Great North Road. Historic streets wind down the steep slopes through Grainger Town, linked by paths and steps to Newcastle Quayside.

The city is united with the town of Gateshead on the south bank of the river by seven bridges. The bridges and iconic buildings of the Quayside and Quays are instantly recognisable and the defining topographical feature is the Tyne Gorge and the River Tyne that runs through it.

Cultural-led regeneration projects have transformed areas such as the Quayside, Quays and Grainger Town. This has led to rapid growth in tourism and Gateshead and Newcastle becoming very popular destinations. Leisure, culture and tourism have been one of the fastest growing industries and have helped raise the area’s profile and image internationally.

The natural and built historic environment is of high quality. It includes fragments of development from the Roman era (most notably Hadrian’s Wall), the medieval Castle Keep and town walls, parish churches and the high-quality urbanisation of Georgian and Victorian times e.g. Grey Street and Grainger Town.

1.4.2 Administrative Boundaries

In order to analyse the current provision and future requirements for open space across Newcastle, 2018 ward boundaries have been used as the geographical areas (as shown in figure 1). This was agreed by the project steering group as the most effective way to analyse provision.

These boundaries are the basis for collating census data across the council area. Of particular relevance to this study are population statistics (estimated by the Council in 2018), which have been used as the basis for much of the current and future assessment of need for open space.
1.4.3 Population Statistics

Table 1  Ward population statistics (Council population estimate 2018)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arthur’s Hill</td>
<td>10243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benwell &amp; Scotswood</td>
<td>11391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blakelaw</td>
<td>10316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byker</td>
<td>11773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Callerton &amp; Throckley</td>
<td>9290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle</td>
<td>8334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapel</td>
<td>9502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dene &amp; South Gosforth</td>
<td>10363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denton &amp; Westerhope</td>
<td>12300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elswick</td>
<td>14667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fawdon &amp; West Gosforth</td>
<td>10733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gosforth</td>
<td>10319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heaton</td>
<td>11645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenton</td>
<td>10636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston Park South &amp; Newbiggin Hall</td>
<td>10756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lemington</td>
<td>10549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manor Park</td>
<td>10319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monument</td>
<td>9140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>Population</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Jesmond</td>
<td>10379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ouseburn</td>
<td>9083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parklands</td>
<td>11440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Jesmond</td>
<td>10439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walker</td>
<td>11741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walkergate</td>
<td>11546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Fenham</td>
<td>10390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wingrove</td>
<td>12884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>280178</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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, however it 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 form of 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;
- 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:

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Figure 2 Summary of methodology

Step 1: Identify local needs

Step 2: Audit local provision

Step 3: Set provision standards

Step 4: Apply the provision standards

Step 5: Draft Policies / Recommendations
```

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 report examines identified local need for various types of open space, sports and recreational opportunities. It has drawn upon a range of survey and analytical techniques as well as a detailed review of existing consultation data and other relevant documentation. The report details the community consultation and research process that has been undertaken as part of the study as well as the main findings. The findings of this assessment are summarised in this document and full details are provided at appendix 1.

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 Newcastle, an initial desktop audit of the open space asset was carried out, this included:

- analysis of existing GIS data held by Newcastle City Council;
- desktop mapping of open space from aerial photography;
- questionnaires to town and parish councils;
- liaison with council officers.

Following this, site visits were undertaken by Ethos at 462 open spaces and 125 outdoor play spaces to assess the existing and potential quality issues with sites. The quality audit drew on criteria set out in the ‘Green Flag Award\(^2\)', and sites were given an ‘existing’, ‘potential’ and ‘gap’ quality score. The audits were undertaken using a standardised methodology and consistent approach. However, audits of this nature can only ever be a snap-shot in time and their main purpose is to provide a consistent and objective assessment of a sites existing and potential 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 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 different functions using a multi-functional approach to mapping. The advantage of the multi-functional approach is that it gives a much more accurate picture of the provision of open space. This is more advantageous than the primary typology approach which tends to result in an over assessment of provision, and which can significantly impact decisions on quantity standards. The differences in approach are demonstrated in figures 4 and 5.

\(^2\) http://www.greenflagaward.org.uk/judges/judging-criteria
Figure 3  Primary approach to open space mapping

Figure 4  Multi-functional mapping of open space
2.4 Set and Apply Provision Standards (Steps 3 and 4)

Local provision standards have been set, with three components, embracing:

- quantity;
- accessibility;
- quality.

**Quantity**

The GIS database and mapping has been used to assess the existing provision of open space across the study area. 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 1000 people. The recommended standards are then used to assess the supply of each type of open space across the study area.

**Access**

Evidence from previous studies, the needs assessment and consideration of national benchmarks are used to develop access standards for open space. Typically, standards are expressed as straight line walk times. A series of maps assessing access for different typologies are presented in the report.

**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. 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 town, ward/parish, and study area 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;
5. Facilities that may be surplus to requirement.
3.0 CONTEXT

3.1 Introduction

This section sets out a brief review of the most relevant national and local policies related 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. Newcastle City Council reserve the right to change and update this section as policies change.

It also provides important contextual information regarding health and deprivation for the city.

The policy overview includes analysis of the Council’s existing strategies and policies. It also includes a review of other strategies of relevance at national and local levels and assesses their implications for the provision of open space, sport and recreation opportunities.

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

3.2.1.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) July 2018

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. 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 96** - 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.
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- 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 98 - 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 149 - 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 170 - Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

3.2.1.2 Green Infrastructure

The concept of green infrastructure (GI) is now firmly embedded in national policy with the NPPF requiring 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 space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities’.

The city has a wide range of existing green infrastructure assets such as open spaces, parks and gardens, allotments, woodlands, street trees, fields, hedges, lakes, ponds, meadows and grassland playing fields, as well as footpaths, cycleways and waterways. However, the concept of GI looks beyond existing designations, seeking opportunities to increase function and connectivity of assets to maximise the benefits for the community.

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

The white paper3 recognised 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 EU and internationally.

3.2.1.4 Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England’s wildlife and ecosystem services, August 2011

This biodiversity strategy for England builds on the Natural Environment White Paper and sets out the strategic direction for national biodiversity policy to implement international and EU commitments.

The ambition of this strategy is 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 Strategy contains four outcomes to be achieved by the end of 2020. These are: Priority Habitats including Sights of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Marine, Species and People.

3.2.1.5 Sporting Future - A New Strategy for an Active Nation, December 2015

This cross-government strategy seeks to address flat-lining levels of sport participation and high levels of inactivity in this country. Through this strategy, government is defining what success in sport means, with a new focus on five key outcomes: physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development and economic development. In future, funding decisions will be made on the basis of the outcomes that sport and physical activity can deliver.

It is government’s ambition that all relevant departments work closer together to create a more physically active nation, where children and young people enjoy the best sporting opportunities available and people of all ages and backgrounds can enjoy the many benefits that sport and physical activity bring, at every stage in their lives.

Government is reaffirming its commitment to Olympic and Paralympic success but also extending that ambition to non-Olympic sports where it will support success through grassroots investment in those sports, and by sharing UK Sport’s knowledge and expertise. The strategy outlines what is expected of the sector to deliver this vision, and how the government will support it in getting there.

Public investment into community sport is to reach children as young as five as part of a ground-breaking new this new strategy. The move will see Sport England’s remit changed from investing in sport for those aged 14 and over to supporting people from five years old right through to pensioners, in a bid to create a more active nation.

Investment will be targeted at sport projects that have a meaningful, measurable impact on how they are improving people’s lives – from helping young people gain skills to get into work, to tackling social inclusion and improving physical and mental health.
Funding will also be targeted at groups who have low participation rates to encourage those who do not take part in sport and physical activity to get involved. This includes supporting women, disabled people, those in lower socio-economic groups and older people. Sport England will set up a new fund in 2016 to get inactive people physically active and will support and measure participation in sport and wider physical activity going forward.

3.2.1.6 Sport England Strategy – ‘Towards an Active Nation’ 2016-2021

In response to the Government’s strategy, Sport England’s new strategy vision is that that everyone in England, regardless of age, background or ability, feels able to take part in sport or activity. Sport England’s new vision and its supporting aims will therefore contribute to achieving the Government's strategy. Key features of the new Strategy are:

- Dedicated funding to get children and young people active from the age of five, including a new fund for family based activities and offering training to at least two teachers in every secondary school in England to help them better meet the needs of all children, irrespective of their level of sporting ability.
- Working with the sport sector to put customers at the heart of everything they do and using the principles of behaviour change to inform their work.
- Piloting new ways of working locally by investing in up to 10 places in England – a mix of urban and rural areas.
- Investing up to £30m in a new volunteering strategy, enabling more people to get the benefits of volunteering and attracting a new, more diverse range of volunteers.
- Helping sport keep pace with the digital expectations of customers – making it as easy to book a badminton court as a hotel room.
- Working closely with governing bodies of sport and others who support people who already play regularly, to help them become more efficient, sustainable and diversify their sources of funding.

3.2.1.7 National Governing Body (NGB) 2013-17 funding

NGB 2013-17 funding is the centrepiece of Sport England’s strategy with over £450 million to be invested in work with NGBs. Young people (14-25 years old) will benefit from 60% of this investment. Programmes will include helping young people move from school sport into club sport and working with universities and colleges to create more sporting opportunities for students. Additional funding will be available to governing bodies that are successfully increasing participation.

3.2.2 Local Context

3.2.2.1 Planning for the Future - Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan (CSUCP) for Gateshead and Newcastle upon Tyne 2010-2030

The Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan (adopted March 2015) is a strategic planning framework that will guide development in Newcastle and Gateshead to 2030. It forms Part 1 of both councils Local Plan, containing an overall vision and spatial growth strategy to deliver
economic prosperity and create lifetime neighbourhoods. The Plan covers the whole of the area within the administrative boundaries of Gateshead and Newcastle and includes strategic policies and specific policies for the Urban Core, Sub-Areas and sites.

Gateshead and Newcastle Councils worked together to prepare a shared planning framework for Gateshead and Newcastle. The decision to prepare a joint Plan was in recognition of the economic advantage to both Local Authority areas. This includes expansion of employment areas, science and research, retail-led development, housing growth and improving infrastructure to support growth at the heart of the region.

Vision 2030: By 2030 Gateshead and Newcastle will be prosperous and sustainable cities that are unique and distinctive places - where people choose to live, work and visit because everyone can realise their full potential and enjoy a high quality lifestyle.

The vision statement recognises that ‘by 2030 Gateshead and Newcastle will be a more prosperous, attractive and sustainable place to live and work, with improved quality of life and thriving communities. Our population will increase to more than 500,000 and we will create approximately 30,000 new homes in sustainable locations’.

Strategic objectives

A number of strategic objectives have been identified which will be delivered by the policies set out in the Plan. The following strategic objectives set out within the Plan are relevant to this study:

- **SO9** Ensure the development and use of land protects, sustains and enhances the quality of the natural, built and historic environment, making the Urban Core a high quality exemplar for Gateshead and Newcastle, and ensuring our communities are attractive, safe and sustainable.
- **SO12** Improve the function, usability and provision of our green infrastructure and public spaces by providing a network of green spaces and features which are connected and accessible for all.

Some of the key policies have been included here as an illustration (although it should be noted that there are numerous policies that include reference to the enhancement and/or provision of open spaces, and not all of them have been included here):

- **Policy CS14 Wellbeing and Health**
  
  The wellbeing and health of communities will be maintained and improved by:

  1. Requiring development to contribute to creating an age friendly, healthy and equitable living environment through:

     i. Creating an inclusive built and natural environment,
     ii. Promoting and facilitating active and healthy lifestyles,
     iii. Preventing negative impacts on residential amenity and wider public safety from noise, ground instability, ground and water contamination, vibration and air quality,
iv. Providing good access for all to health and social care facilities, and
v. Promoting access for all to green spaces, sports facilities, play and recreation opportunities.

2. Promoting allotments and gardens for exercise, recreation and for healthy locally produced food

3. Controlling the location of, and access to, unhealthy eating outlets.

- **Policy CS18 Green Infrastructure and the Natural Environment**
  A high quality and comprehensive framework of interconnected green infrastructure that offers ease of movement and an appealing natural environment for people and wildlife will be achieved by:

1. Maintaining, protecting and enhancing the integrity, connectivity, multi-functionality and accessibility of the Strategic Green Infrastructure Network.
2. Protection, enhancement and management of green infrastructure assets which include:
   
   i. Biodiversity and geodiversity assets, including designated sites, designated wildlife corridors and priority habitats and species,
   
   ii. Distinctive landscape character, recognising the particular importance of our rivers and topography, and
   
   iii. Trees, woodland and hedgerows.

3. Addressing gaps in the network and making improvements in Opportunity Areas.
4. Improving and extending linkages to and within the Strategic Green Infrastructure Network.
5. Protecting and enhancing open spaces, sport and recreational facilities in accordance with agreed standards in line with National Policy.
6. Improving access to, along and onto the River Tyne and tributaries, without adversely impacting on the local ecology or damaging the river banks.

- **Policy UC15 Urban Green Infrastructure**
  Development will protect and enhance the Urban Green Infrastructure Network, address gaps and improve linkages to the Strategic Green Infrastructure Network at:

1. Ouseburn,
2. Jesmond to Quays,
3. Universities,
4. Exhibition Park to Redheugh Bridge,
5. Riverside Park to Windmill Hill Park,
6. Regent Street,
7. Exemplar Neighbourhood,
8. Gateshead Quays and Baltic Business Quarter,
9. Exemplar Neighbourhood to Gateshead East Cemetery,
10. Exemplar Neighbourhood to Saltmeadows Riverside (and River Tyne),
11. Gateshead Quays to Saltmeadows Riverside, and
12. Southern Gateway to Saltwell Park.

3.2.2.2 Newcastle upon Tyne Unitary Development Plan (UDP)

Adopted in 1998, the Saved Policies from this UDP are to be used in conjunction with the joint Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan (2015) until superseded through Part 2 of the Local Plan, the Development and Allocations Plan.

The UDP sets quantity standards for open space contributions required from developments, based on the resulting increase in population. These standards will be reviewed and updated as part of this study.

The saved policies in the UDP provide for the following open space standards (Saved Policy OS 1.2 and Development Control Policy Statement 18):

- local open space 1.20 ha / 1000 persons or 12.0 m² / person;
- outdoor sport 1.10 ha / 1000 persons or 11.0 m² / person
- allotments 0.60 ha / 1000 persons or 6.0 m² / person
- equipped play 5.0 m² / dwelling of two or more bedrooms

3.2.2.3 Walker Riverside Area Action Plan (WRAAP) 2006-2021

Adopted in 2007, this Development Plan Document is a long term action plan for the planning and regeneration of the Walker Riverside area of Newcastle upon Tyne.

The Walker Riverside vision is to:

- Build on the character, humour, strong families and informal community networks that have enabled Walker to endure difficult times.
- Gradually improve the local environment, housing, shops, schools, transport, education and health services to make Walker Riverside a vibrant local economy and location of choice for families to live, stay and work, now and in the future.
- Improve and revitalise each locality in Walker Riverside and create a new centre incorporating shops and facilities that is a wonderful place for families and people of all ages and backgrounds to enjoy safely.

Objectives:

This Plan will designate sites to build 1,600 new and replacement homes in Walker Riverside over the next fifteen years and create a new neighbourhood centre in the heart of the area. This is being done to achieve the following objectives:

- increase the population of Walker Riverside, and especially the number of families
- achieve a wider mix of housing and forms of tenure that better meet needs and aspirations
• create a strong new community focus: an accessible, attractive neighbourhood centre providing good quality local shops, services and facilities in a good, safe environment
• invest effectively in housing, the environment and local services to create the right conditions for a strong, long term, sustainable local economy and housing market
• restructure the provision and delivery of local services in a way that supports the engagement of the community in the management and delivery of services

The Area Action Plan will deliver the following improvements in the Walker Riverside area:

i. investment in parks and open spaces
ii. energy efficiency and renewable energy generation improvements to all new homes
iii. development of a community resource centre
iv. new primary schools in the east and west of the area
v. improved leisure facilities
vi. development of a new neighbourhood centre (Community Focus) on Walker Road
vii. green corridors and environmental improvements
viii. wider environmental (boulevard) improvements along Walker Road/ Station Road

The Walker Riverside Regeneration Plan is structured around the following themes:

• A Walker Riverside for everyone
• A Walker Riverside where people want to live
• A Walker Riverside that is accessible
• A Walker Riverside that offers lifelong learning opportunities
• A Walker Riverside that is healthy and caring and offers creativity and culture
• A Walker Riverside that is safe
• A Walker Riverside where the environment is protected and improved
• A Walker Riverside that is prosperous

Following the adoption of the CSUCP some of the policies in WRAAP have been superseded and deleted following a review. These are:

HP3 – Housing Type (superseded by CSUCP CS11)
HP4 – Tenure mix within new housing development (superseded by CSUCP CS11 (5))
EP1 – Design (superseded by CSUCP CS11, CS15, and CS16)
TP4 - Public transport improvements (superseded by CSUCP DEL1)
LC1 – Shopping provision (superseded by CSUCP CS7)
IP1 – Supporting the community through change (superseded by CSUCP DEL1)
3.2.2.4 Benwell Scotswood Area Action Plan (BSAAP)

Adopted in 2009, this Development Plan Document covers the period 2009 to 2024 and beyond and focuses on the delivery of regeneration in the Benwell, Scotswood and West Road neighbourhoods. The Plan sets out the policy framework against which planning applications will be assessed, and is the spatial plan that acts as the key delivery vehicle for the regeneration of the plan area. It also helps deliver and coordinate public and private sector investment.

Through the plan making process the following has been derived as the overarching aim for the area:

*To have substantially and noticeably transformed the image and experience of living, working and visiting Benwell, Scotswood and the West Road by 2024.*

The area will be transformed as a result of regeneration opportunities, meeting the following more specific aims:

- By 2024 Benwell, Scotswood and the West Road will be a series of distinctive and attractive neighbourhoods with different residential offers and identities, able to meet the needs and aspirations of communities in a sustainable manner.
- By 2024 Benwell, Scotswood and the West Road neighbourhoods will complement and reinforce each other, creating an area of mixed and inclusive communities. Good quality, basic amenities and services will be within walking access of everyone.
- By 2024 Benwell, Scotswood and the West Road will be internationally known for its exemplary design and community renewal. Heritage, cultural, and environmental assets, including the line of Hadrian’s Wall, will have been enhanced and developed to create a sense of place.
- By 2024 Benwell, Scotswood and the West Road, which lies in close proximity to the city centre, will have a sustainable transport network which facilitates access to education and employment opportunities.

In order to achieve the strategic aims the vision for the plan can be summarised as:

*A family friendly area that will successfully compete with other parts of the city and region, which is characterised by distinctive neighbourhoods and sustainable communities that are built to last and will support economic growth.*

The strategic aims and vision for the Plan are underpinned by the following objectives which have been developed in response to the current issues and realities of the area:

- **Creating a good image for the area:** To develop a powerful ‘brand’ and quality of life ‘package’ that matches the expectations of people who want to stay in or will be attracted to the area.
- **Attracting new and diverse people, particularly families:** To diversify the demographic and socio-economic base of the area through retaining existing and attracting new residents to the area, particularly families.
• **Benefiting from city economic growth:** To transform local people’s capacity to benefit from city and regional economic growth through improved education opportunities and provision of local employment opportunities.

• **Schools as key drivers of transformation:** To facilitate schools and other education providers to be key drivers of transformation of the area, through giving appropriate priority to the development of new and improved facilities.

• ** Delivering a wider choice of housing:** To deliver a greater diversity of housing type, tenure and affordability levels, through interventions in the housing market.

• **Providing a good, accessible range of shops and services:** To co-locate shops and services at attractive, convenient and accessible locations, through the provision of new retail and to regenerate existing district neighbourhood centres.

• **Health and wellbeing:** To contribute to improvements in health and wellbeing of the community.

• **Starting with the parks:** To provide a network of well-designed open spaces which create a sense of place, provides identity to neighbourhoods and supports natural environments.

• **Making the most of historic, landscape and cultural assets:** To conserve and make the most of the areas historic, landscape and cultural assets as key distinguishing features, through protecting enhancing and developing these assets.

• **Building on its strategic location and addressing accessibility:** To address the physical barriers to connecting people to jobs and services within and outside of the area. Particularly addressing local accessibility and strategic connectivity by sustainable forms of transport and enhancing connections to and from employment locations.

• **Creating safe and secure environments:** To establish safe and secure, sustainable and inclusive neighbourhoods, through the mix and design of development and management of neighbourhoods.

• **Future-proofing development:** To reduce carbon emissions and activities that contribute to climate change, through encouraging the use of renewable energy on-site and the use of more sustainable methods of construction.

• **Getting it right:** To ensure that proposals are realistic and deliverable with widespread support.

Following the adoption of the CSUCP some of the policies in BSAAP have been superseded and deleted following a review. These are:

SP2 – Delivering sustainable development (superseded by CSUCP CS1, CS5, CS7, CS8, CS11, CS13, CS14, CS15, CS18).
H2 – Achieving tenure choice and diversity (superseded by CSUCP CS11)
H3 – Choice of housing types (superseded by CSUCP CS11)
SS1 – Hierarchy of shopping centres (superseded by CSUCP CS7)
EC3 – Utilising waterway for open space (superseded by CSUCP CS18)
EC4 – Protecting and enhancing culture and heritage (superseded by CSUCP CS15)
D1 – Developer contributions (superseded by CSUCP DEL1)
3.2.2.5 Plan for Playing Pitches

The Council adopted a Plan for Playing Pitches in October 2015. It follows on from the Playing Pitch Assessment that was presented to Cabinet in March 2015. This Plan uses a nationally approved methodology on which its findings are based providing a strategic approach to the provision and development of playing pitches and a process to enable the council to deliver and secure investment in playing pitches across the city.

A key finding is that the city has insufficient accessible playing pitches to cope with the numbers of matches that will be generated by a growth in population. This will mean that some areas in the city, as well as upgrading existing facilities, will also require new outdoor facilities for sport.

The Plan sets out a clear process that the council should follow, a Pitches Review Group has been established that will take forward the recommendations, monitor the plan and shape future delivery.

3.2.2.6 Plan for Built Facilities

The Council adopted a Plan for Built Facilities in October 2015. The Plan sets out the requirements for built facilities to 2030 and follows on from the built facilities assessment report presented to cabinet in March 2015.

This plan sets out key issues that need to be addressed providing the Council with a long-term approach for investment and development of sports facilities.

The Plan will help to bring investment into the city and will help sustain sports facilities for the next fifteen to twenty years. The Plan also gives direction to planners and developers in assessing the need to seek developer contributions or funding from the community infrastructure levy.

3.2.2.7 Newcastle City Council and Gateshead Council Green Infrastructure Study Report (August 2011)

This study forms part of the evidence base for the CSUCP and identifies the network of multifunctional green space and other relevant land and watercourses, which supports the activity, health and well-being of local people and wildlife across Newcastle and Gateshead. It also identifies green infrastructure deficiencies that can be addressed through future growth whilst looking at opportunities for conservation and enhancement of existing provision, including links in green space provision both within and across council boundaries. There is a focus on the River Tyne, as a key recreational, access and wildlife corridor of shared significance for Newcastle and Gateshead and a physical connection between many of the future growth locations.

Vision:
NewcastleGateshead’s green infrastructure is the network of multi-functional green and undeveloped land, urban and rural, which supports the activity, health and well-being of local people and wildlife.

The Green Infrastructure Strategy is intended to achieve better quality, more effective functioning and greater diversity of our green infrastructure. This will contribute to achieving sustainable communities and regeneration, promote better health and a better quality of life for all, mitigate the effects of climate change, enhance biodiversity and preserve historic landscapes. A high quality provision and comprehensive framework of geographically inter-connected green infrastructure will offer ease of movement to people and wildlife and provide many different opportunities for outdoor activity. It will also provide an attractive and healthy setting for homes, schools, workplaces and the rest of the built environment, thereby improving the well-being of everyone, even when they are not directly using it. Green infrastructure also provides a valuable biodiversity resource; while inter-connections between habitats may enable movement of species in response to climate change.

Using the evidence collected (Evidence Base report 2011 – outlined below) and taking account of the key issues identified in the Evidence Base, thirteen strategic corridors were identified which together make up a strategic green infrastructure network, based on multifunctional corridors fulfilling wildlife, access, floodplain and landscape functions and aligning with key green infrastructure assets and opportunity areas for development of green infrastructure.

The thirteen strategic corridors are as follows:

1. Seaton Burn and Prestwick Carr
2. Gosforth Park and Weetslade
3. Ouseburn to Walbottle Dene
4. Wallsend Burn to Haddricks Mill
5. Town Moor and Woolsington
6. Bowes Railway East and Bill Quay
7. Eighton Banks, Windy Nook and Heworth
8. Saltwell Park
9. Team Valley
10. Tanfield Railway
11. Derwent Valley
12. Blaydon and Barlow Burns
13. River Tyne

The strategy also identifies gaps in provision and highlights the functions and benefits of Green Infrastructure (GI), including the relationships between Core Strategy themes and GI functions. The importance of multi--functionality is also highlighted.

The strategy sets out a number of priorities for action including: strategic (seeking to ensure that the GI network is safeguarded and enhanced and that gaps that limit wildlife movement or access by people are addressed); opportunity areas (for GI development); areas of development (e.g. working with developers to address identified gaps); biodiversity; non-
motorised transport; recreation quiet enjoyment and health benefits; economic benefits and, heritage preservation and cultural expression, enhancement of distinctive landscapes and townscapes; sustainable water and flood risk management; mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.

Appendix D of this report is the Newcastle Gateshead Green Infrastructure Strategy report for the River Tyne (a key strategic corridor).

3.2.2.8 Newcastle City and Gateshead Council Green Infrastructure Study – Evidence Base (2011)

The study was intended to form the first part of the Green Infrastructure Strategy and provides an evidence base to support the joint Core Strategy.

The key issues are highlighted regarding recreation and accessible green space are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Green Space Typology</th>
<th>Key Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parks and Gardens</td>
<td>• The two authorities have different definitions and standards for provision of formal parks. This may need to be addressed when planning provision within the joint Core Strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A significant proportion of Newcastle and Gateshead residents do not live within walking distance from a park and therefore opportunities to increase provision in appropriate locations should be sought to meet this deficiency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The quality of provision is variable across NewcastleGateshead. Whereas there are 15 parks across the study area that have achieved Green Flag status, indicating a level of high quality provision, some sites are in decline and require investment or a different maintenance approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There is demand for improved play facilities for toddlers and children, particularly in Gateshead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The provision of key facilities such as toilets needs to be addressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The cost of maintenance of formal parks is likely to come under greater scrutiny as local authority budgets come under increased pressure due to spending cuts in the next few years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There is the opportunity to consider different maintenance regimes to improve biodiversity within some parks or even areas within parks. Some maintenance regimes to improve biodiversity may result in lower costs, but it is more likely that appropriate management for wildlife would result in increased costs. In addition, the sites must be selected carefully to ensure that essential recreational value is not lost where it is needed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Amenity Green Space        | • It may be possible to alter the functions of some amenity green space sites in order to increase their multifunctionality, i.e. in many cases their value could be increased through the planting
of further vegetation or providing additional equipment at sites, such as provision of play equipment.

- In areas of amenity green space surplus it may be possible to change the use or design of the space so that it can be used to meet further deficiencies in the GI network.
- In Newcastle it was recognised that amenity green space sites are often popular and used regularly by local residents. It is therefore important to recognise their value to the local community.

### Accessible Natural Green Space

- Opportunities exist to strengthen links between the NewcastleGateshead GI network and neighbouring authorities through the Green Belt.
- Opportunities exist to meet the objectives of land included within the Green Belt. PPG2 outlines the opportunities for the use of such land for recreational purposes, to allow access to the open countryside, to retain and enhance attractive landscapes and to secure nature conservation interest.
- The Green Belt provides a significant, protected GI asset in the area.

### Outdoor Sports Provision

- There are opportunities for tree planting on the perimeter of pitches and this is supported in the Newcastle Green Space Strategy.
- There are insufficient playing pitches in parts of both Gateshead and Newcastle. Methods of decreasing these deficiencies need to be identified. Such methods could include converting some types of pitch where there is a surplus to meet these deficiencies and addressing the provision of outdoor play/sport provision in more innovative ways.

### Play Areas

- The majority of Newcastle play areas are doorstep playable space (minimum size of 0.1ha).
- Newcastle and Gateshead have received play Pathfinder and Play-builder funding to support the enhancement of at least 50 play areas in the two authorities’ areas. However, the government has now announced the abolition of these programmes.
- A surplus of play areas is identified within some areas of Newcastle and deficiencies have been highlighted to the east of the city centre.
- Areas deficient in play area provision have been identified in Gateshead, these tend to be within established residential areas.
- Many of the grass pitches identified as play areas by Gateshead could be developed as playing pitches to meet deficiencies in junior and mini football pitches.

### Public Rights of Way and and

- NewcastleGateshead supports national and regional recreational routes.
### Recreational Routes
- A network of green corridors is designated and protected within Newcastle and Gateshead. However, standards in relation to access and quality are provided by Newcastle only.
- Missing links currently constrain the existing access network. The Tyne and Wear Rights of Way Improvement Plan identifies a number of schemes to fill the gaps in the current PROW network, which will be considered within the GI strategy.
- There is a need to provide access to a greater variety of users and the provision of multi-user routes will be need to be considered as appropriate.
- Identified aspirations for access routes (e.g. the creation of a continuous access route along the River Tyne) and improvements to the ‘attractiveness’ of routes will, where appropriate, be explored within the GI strategy.
- In potential areas for growth challenges and opportunities for access will emerge and will be considered within the GI strategy.

### Allotments
- A substantial increase in demand for allotments is reported nationally and this trend is reflected at a regional level. This trend is expected to continue over the next few years.
- Over 826 residents are on allotment waiting lists in Newcastle.
- The number of Newcastle residents on waiting list has increased between 2001-2008.
- There is a demand for smaller plots and over 75% of Newcastle associations are already splitting plots to provide further provision.

### Cemeteries
- A new cemetery site of 4 hectares is required in east Newcastle. This provides opportunities for enhancement of biodiversity and landscape character.
- The possibility of providing a woodland burial site will be explored further in the GI Strategy.

### 3.2.2.9 Green Space Strategy (April 2004)

This document was adopted as Council strategy in November 2004. It is part of the Council’s suite of supplementary planning guidance.

**Vision:**

*Newcastle’s green spaces belong to local people. They should be cherished, accessible, safe and clean – managed for the future and there for everyone to enjoy.*

The strategy was based on extensive consultation and an audit of open spaces (mapping provision of open spaces based on the typologies set out in PPG17 Companion Guide and quality, benefit and distance audits) which informed a number of recommendations, including recommended standards for new provision/regeneration.

The standards that were recommended are shown below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Green space within 5 minutes’ walk</th>
<th>Green space within 10 minutes’ walk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Everyone in Newcastle should have access to a good quality green space, with somewhere to sit or walk, relax and experience greenery. For public or communal spaces, the minimum size should be at least 0.1 hectares with no dimension smaller than 15 metres. The space should be within 300 metres walk from the home or workplace, without having to cross a classified road (approximately 5 minutes’ walk). The space should offer trees, grass, flowers or bulbs, surfaced paths, seats, litter bins and have lighting at night. In residential areas, with family homes, Newcastle’s youngest children (0-5 years) should have easy, safe access to green spaces close by. Where there are no gardens, doorstep green spaces should be within 50 metres of home. In high density areas over 30 homes per hectare, where there is less likelihood of family homes, spaces should be within 100 metres of home. No child aged 5 or under, should have to cross a road with permitted traffic speeds over 20mph, to reach this space.</td>
<td>Everyone in Newcastle should have access to good quality local green space of at least 2 hectares, within 600 metres walk of the home or workplace (approximately 10 minutes’ walk without crossing a classified road). This green space should offer trees, grass, flowers or bulbs, surfaced paths, seats, litter bins and have lighting at night. In residential areas this space should also provide a place for primary and junior school age children (5-12 years) to play, including a reasonably sized level grassed area for ball sports with minimum 5 metre wide 'buffers' separating the grassed space from roads, footpaths or buildings. No child aged 5-12 years should have to cross a classified road to reach the local space.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local park within 15 minutes’ walk</th>
<th>Large park within 20 minutes’ walk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Everyone in Newcastle should have access to a good quality local 'neighbourhood park' of at least 6 hectares, within 1 kilometre walk of the home, school or workplace (approximately 15 minutes’ walk allowing for using safe crossings to classified roads and other hazards). The park should offer trees, grass, flowers or bulbs, surfaced paths, seats, litter bins, toilets and lighting at night. In residential areas this space should also provide a place for school age children and young people (5-18 years) to play, walk, meet friends and play informal sports including equipped play areas for the different age groups to use in safety. There should be reasonably sized level grassed areas for a range of informal sports, with minimum 5-metre-</td>
<td>Everyone in Newcastle should have access to one or more major regional or 'city' park or space over 10 hectares in size, offering a range of facilities and opportunities for the whole community and for wildlife, within 1.5 kilometres walk (approximately 20 minutes’ walk) from home, school or workplace.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


wide 'buffers' separating the grassed space from roads, footpaths or buildings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allotments</th>
<th>Nature area or woodland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allotments should be available within 1 kilometre of home.</td>
<td>Everyone in Newcastle should have access to woodland or a local nature area of at least 2 hectares, within 2 kilometres of home.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Green routes</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Everyone in Newcastle should be able to have access to an off-road walking and cycling route within 1 kilometre of home, shops or work, that allows access to the wider linked green space network of Newcastle.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.2.2.10 City of Newcastle Public Green Space, Sport and Recreation Needs and Opportunities (October 2009)

The report was undertaken to assess the quantity of public green spaces and sports provision managed by the council in order to determine if there is sufficient provision, of an appropriate quality and in the right place, to meet local needs.

The standards of provision for quality, quantity and access for public open space were extensively consulted upon as part of the Green Space Strategy (2004). Further work on locally set standards was carried out, as recommended in the Green Space Strategy.

The information on allotments was prepared from the draft allotment strategy (2008). The play Strategy (2008), Playing Pitch Strategy (2004 and 2008 refresh), Get in and Swim A Strategy for the City of Newcastle (2008-2018) and Sports Facilities Strategy (Draft) PPG17 Assessment data and Evidence (2008) were also used to inform the assessment.

The study found that Newcastle as a whole is not deficient in green space. Some parts of Newcastle have more and/or better green spaces than others. This unequal distribution means that some parts of the City are deficient. Some of the green space is lacking in both quality and functionality.

The recommended standards are as follows:
# Parks and gardens

## Local parks

**Typology:** Local parks must include a mix of park and garden, natural and semi-natural and amenity green space, and equipped play areas, with trees, grass, flowers or bulbs, surfaced paths, seats, litter bins, toilets and lighting at night. There will be facilities for children and young people including equipped play areas for different age groups to use in safety, reasonably sized level grassed areas for a range of informal sports, minimum 5 metre wide buffers separating the grassed space from footpaths or buildings and 10 metres from vehicular roads.

**Size:** Minimum 6 hectares, but ideally many parks will be larger, (see Large Parks section below).

**Quality:** Achieving Green Flag or equivalent (minimum grade 2A in Newcastle City Council’s quality audit).

**Distance:** 15 minutes walk from home, including using safe crossings to classified roads.

**Quantity:** 2 hectares per 1000 people in residential areas

## Large parks (desirable not essential)

**Typology:** Must include a mix of park and garden, natural and semi-natural and amenity green space, sports facilities and pitches and, equipped play areas, and facilities at least equivalent to local parks and offering a range of opportunities for the whole community.

**Size:** Minimum 10 hectares

**Quality:** Achieving Green Flag or equivalent (minimum grade 2A in Newcastle City Council’s quality audit)

**Distance:** 20 minutes walk from home.

**Quantity:** No standard set

## Natural and semi-natural green space

### Woodlands and nature areas

**Typology:** Natural and semi-natural with woodland and trees.

**Size:** Minimum 2 hectares

**Quality:** Achieving minimum Grade 3A in Newcastle City Council’s quality audit.

**Distance:** Minimum 30 minutes walk or 20 minutes journey time from home.

**Quantity:** 0.8 hectare per 1000 people in residential areas.

## Green corridors

**Typology:** Ideally corridors will be located through parks and gardens, natural and semi-natural and amenity green space, outdoor sports areas and equipped play areas, linking these together. Vehicles will be segregated so that they cannot use these routes.

**Size:** No standard set.

**Quality:** Achieving minimum Grade 3A on Newcastle City Council’s quality audit.

**Distance:** 15 minutes walk from home.

**Quantity:** No standard set
Provision for participation in sport

Grass playing pitches

**Typology:** Pitches, facilities and equipment, for outdoor team games: football, rugby, and cricket, including provision for junior as well as senior games. Ideally the facilities should be located within either Large or Local Parks and thus be part of a multi-functional and fully publicly accessible green space.

**Size:** Minimum 0.7 hectare designated for the playing of competitive or casual football, cricket, or rugby (union and league).

**Quality:** A level and well-drained playing surface, is safe to play on with associated changing and showering facilities.

**Distance:** Within 20 minutes journey time and ideally within 20 minutes walk from home, using only safe crossings over classified roads and other hazards.

**Quantity:** 0.62 hectare per1000 population in residential areas.

Swimming pools

**Typology:** Buildings incorporating a heated indoor swimming pool, with changing facilities, toilets and lockers.

**Size:** Traditional pools can vary in size but should have a minimum of 6 lanes and be a minimum of 25 metres in length. Free form pools have no standard requirements.

**Quality:** No standard set other than temperature which should be around 29°C for general public swimming and 26°C for competitive swimming.

**Distance:** Within a 20 minute journey time and ideally within a 20-minute walk of home, work or school.

**Quantity:** At least one indoor pool per 20,000 households or 46,000 resident population or 92,000 employees.

Sports facilities

Every home in Newcastle should have access to a swimming pool and a sports hall within a 20 minute journey time and ideally within a 20 minute walk.

**Quantity:** At least one indoor sports hall and one swimming pool per 20,000 households or 46,000 resident population

Synthetic Turf Pitch

**Typology:** Non-grass all weather pitches used to accommodate a range of sports and team games. Pitches vary in the requirements for each sport, hockey requires a carpet with shock pad filled with sand, football only requires shock pad with rubber fill (3G) and rugby a deeper shock pad with rubber fill (4G).

**Size:** Equivalent to a senior hockey pitch (101.4 x 63 metres pitch + run off, requiring 0.7 hectare).

**Quality:** No standard set but they should have car parking, changing rooms with lockers for security and floodlighting.

**Distance:** Within a 20-minute journey time and ideally within a 20-minute walk of home, work or school.

**Quantity:** At least 1 synthetic pitch per 30,000 households or 69,000 resident population.
Amenity green space

Doorstep space

**Typology:** Amenity space, ideally a mix of garden, natural and amenity green space with trees, grass, flowers or bulbs, surfaced paths, seats, litter bins, and lighting at night.

**Size:** Minimum 0.1 hectare.

**Quality:** Achieving minimum Grade 3A in Newcastle City Council’s quality audit.

**Distance:** 5 minutes walk from home, work or school.

**Quantity:** 0.2 ha per 1000 people in residential areas

Local open space (desirable not essential)

**Typology:** Amenity space, ideally a mix of garden, natural and amenity green space with trees, grass, flowers or bulbs, surfaced paths, seats, litter bins, and lighting at night.

**Size:** Minimum 0.1 hectare.

**Quality:** Achieving minimum Grade 3A in Newcastle City Council’s quality audit.

**Distance:** 10 minutes walk from home.

**Quantity:** 0.2 ha per 1000 people in residential areas

Provision for children and young people

Doorstep playable space

**Typology:** A landscaped space designed for young children to play in as well as meeting the criteria for doorstep space as above.

**Size:** Minimum 0.1 hectare.

**Quality:** The space will not adjoin a classified road and must be overlooked by house frontages or front gardens on two or more sides. The space will include naturalistic features designed to enable active and imaginative play (e.g. boulders, logs, slopes) plus seating areas for carers to sit and talk. Ideally the location will be on a well-used non-vehicular through route.

**Distance:** Within 10 minutes walk of home, using only safe crossings over classified roads.

**Quantity:** 0.033 hectare (330 square metres) per 1000 population in residential areas.

Local playable space

**Typology:** A landscaped space with play equipment and a multi-use games area, for children up to 13 years. In practice the majority of these play areas will be located in parks and larger amenity green space sites. Any not located within parks must be overlooked by house frontages or front gardens on two or more sides and must not adjoin a classified road. There must be a buffer area at least 10 metres in width between the play equipment and a vehicular road.

**Size:** Minimum 0.3 hectare.

**Quality:** Landscaping to create a safe, green and attractive setting with natural features and interest, including changes of level. Equipment and appropriate safety surfacing will be integrated into the landscaping to allow the children to
swing, slide and climb. Seating areas for children and carers will be incorporated within view of the play equipment. Games area construction must conform to BS/EN 15330 –1: Surfaces for Sports Areas.

**Distance:** 15 minutes walk from home, including using safe crossings to classified roads.

**Quantity:** No standard set as provided other open space

**Neighbourhood playable space** (desirable not essential)

**Typology:** Freely available, informal play facilities located in ‘destination’ play spaces. Ideally there will be such a facility in all the popular larger parks and spaces in Newcastle but they are regarded as desirable rather than essential for meeting needs. Any facilities outside parks must be overlooked by house frontages or front gardens on two or more sides and must not adjoin a classified road. Ideally there should be a buffer area at least 10 metres in width between the play facility and a vehicular road.

Spaces may be designed to include active skate boarding, BMX riding and/or a range of other games such as tennis, netball and five-a-side football, usually incorporating a multi-use games area. (MUGA) They can be the size of a single tennis court or many times larger and able to accommodate sports such as tennis, netball, football and hockey.

**Size:** Minimum 0.5 hectare.

**Quality:** MUGA construction must conform to BS/EN 15330 –1: Surfaces for Sports Areas.

**Distance:** 20 minutes walk from home.

**Quantity:** No standard set

### Allotments community gardens and urban farms

**Allotments**

**Typology:** Allotments, community gardens and urban farms. Allotments should have perimeter fencing, main paths ideally 1.2 metres wide and an access/turning place for vehicles. Ideally there should be a mains water supply, path surfacing and reasonable access for those with a disability.

**Size:** Minimum 0.3 hectare, but ideally larger sites of 0.7 hectare.

**Quality:** No standard set

**Distance:** Ideally within 15 minutes walk or 10 minutes journey time from home.

**Quantity:** 0.3 hectare per 1000 residents in residential areas.

### Cemeteries, disused churchyards and other burial grounds

**Cemeteries and churchyards**

**Typology:** Cemeteries and churchyards - areas for burial and quiet contemplation.

**Size:** No standard set

**Quality:** Achieving minimum Grade 2A in Newcastle City Council’s quality audit in the open cemeteries and Grade 3A in Newcastle City Council’s quality audit in the closed cemeteries.

**Distance:** No standard set
3.2.2.11 Public Green Space, Sport and Recreation Addendum (2013)

The report is an addendum to 2009 Public Green Space, Sports and Recreation Needs and Opportunities Assessment which was in accordance with the now deleted PPG17. The addendum was produced to inform the CSUCP in recognition of the NPPF and replaces Chapters 1 and 13 of the 2009 report. Specifically, it removes references to the Sustainable Communities Strategy (as there is no longer a requirement to prepare this) as a policy driver and updates the 2009 report to align it with the revised Government Guidance contained in the NPPF.

The addendum proposes that to meet the requirements identified in the NPPF, categories of spaces identified in the 2009 report are grouped together by looking at the function of the spaces, while still recognising the individual definitions of the 2009 report.

For **Open Space** it is proposed to split this into 2 separate groupings:

- **Amenity Space** which includes door step space; local open space; and, green corridors
- **Larger Green Spaces** which includes local parks; large parks; woodlands and nature areas

For **Sports and Recreation Facilities** it is proposed to split this into 3 separate groupings:

- **Play Space** which includes door step playable space; local playable space; and, neighbourhood playable space
- **Active Sports** which includes grass playing pitches; swimming pools; sport centres and, synthetic turf pitches
- **Other Green Spaces** which includes allotments; cemeteries; churchyards; and, crematoria

By grouping these typologies together, it is recognised that it is important that people have nearby access to green space, but not that they have access to all these typologies as per the standards set out in the 2009 report.

The addendum proposes new distance standards to reflect the proposed new groupings.

- For **Amenity Space** the target will be a 5 minute walk (approx 400m). This is the target distance set for Doorstep Spaces in the 2009 report and is considerably less than the targets set for Local Open Space (10 mins) and Green Corridors (15 mins) set out for the component parts of this grouping in the 2009 report.
- For **Larger Green Spaces** the target is a 10 minute walk (approx 800m). This is significantly less than the target distances for Local Parks (15 mins), Large Parks (20 mins) and Woodland and Nature Areas (20 mins) set out for the component parts of this grouping in the 2009 report
- For **Sports and Recreation Facilities** the targets will remain unchanged from the 2009 report.
The Unitary Development Plan and Development Control Policy Statement 18 set quantity standards for open space based on the resulting increases in population. These standards have been saved but will be reviewed and updated as part of work on the Local Plan. These standards can be applied to the new groupings as follows:

- **Amenity Space**: 0.20ha per 1000 persons
- **Larger Green Spaces**: 1.00ha per 1000 persons
- **Sports and Recreation Facilities**: 1.1ha Outdoor Sport Facilities and 0.60ha Allotments per 1000 persons; and, 5 sq.m Equipped Children’s Play per dwelling.

**Standards for Amenity Space 2013**

- Everyone in Newcastle should have access to good quality green space greater than 0.1 Ha within a 5 minute walk (400m) of their home, school or workplace.
- Amenity Green Spaces are landscaped areas normally greater than 0.1Ha (i.e. slightly larger than a standard football pitch) easily accessible from homes, schools and workplaces.
- Predominately grass with trees.
- Layout should be unambiguous with a clear structure and footpath layout which enhances personal security, such as allowing passive surveillance from adjacent properties and highway.
- There is potential for amenity green space to be managed in a more naturalistic way to enhance wildlife networks and to add diversity and interest.

**Standards for Larger Green Spaces 2013**

- Everyone in Newcastle should have access to a good quality park, or larger natural space within 10 minute walk (800m) of their home, school or workplace.
- These spaces are normally over 2Ha.
- Larger Green Spaces designated for leisure and community events or natural green spaces with a range of habitats managed with emphasis on wildlife and nature conservation.
- Parks will have features such as surfaced paths, seats and litter bins and can be used as a setting for additional facilities including equipped play areas or grassed areas for a range of informal sports.
- Natural green spaces do not provide the same experience as traditional Victorian parks but in such areas, opportunities should be taken to upgrade both facilities for people and habitat for wildlife.

**3.2.2.12 Tyne and Wear Rights of Way Improvement Plan and Equestrian Access Strategy**

The Tyne and Wear Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007 – 2011 is a blueprint for improving the network of public rights of way across Tyne and Wear.
It was formally published in February 2008 by Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland Councils. The ROWIP was updated to cover 2011 – 2021 and published as part of the third Local Transport Plan.

The Plan, which the Councils are required to produce by law, looks at how best to improve existing rights of way across Tyne and Wear and also looks forward to the future.

The main aims of the Plan are to:

- Consider the present and future needs of the general public and users
- Look at the need for exercise, recreation and enjoyment of the countryside, and access to the countryside
- To consider the accessibility needs of visually and mobility-impaired people, both now and in the future.

The core of the plan is a Statement of Action (SOA), which prioritises the work the authorities propose to undertake to secure an improved network of local Rights of Way and access opportunities. Possible activities are presented under eight general themes, with an indication of costs, timescales and who needs to be involved. The eight general themes are:

SOA1 Making the Countryside More Accessible;
SOA2 A Safer Activity;
SOA3 47,000 new homes;
SOA4 Knowing what’s out there?
SOA5 Filling in the Gaps;
SOA6 Better Land Management;
SOA7 Develop Definitive Map and other Records; and
SOA8 A Better Countryside Environment

**Equestrian Strategy**

The Equestrian Strategy investigates the usage of Rights of Way and other routes across Tyne and Wear by equestrians and carriage drivers and identifies barriers to increased use as well as key issues regarding the provision of equestrian and horse driving access to the countryside.

The majority of respondents expressed a strong need for more safe off-road access for equestrians. The main priority for equestrians is to ‘enhance the existing network’ by creating linkages, safe crossings, parking and access to more existing Rights of Way. This could produce significant improvements without the need for the creation of new bridleways.

However, equestrians also highlight other priorities therefore any improvement strategies must be multi-faceted to satisfy the variety of needs. The research also identified a general lack of information regarding Rights of Way and permissive routes at local level. Addressing
this deficiency could be a cost effective strategy for 'improvement' without the need for physical works.

A number of respondents reported encountering various problems when horse riding. These included structural problems with the network, quality of maintenance issues and behavioural issues.

The strategy has been developed in conjunction with the Public Rights of Way Officers, The Tyne and Wear Joint Local Access Forum and Bridleway Groups across Tyne and Wear. The Authorities’ aim is to:

Enable equestrian activity to take place, as safely as possible, across Tyne and Wear on the road and bridleway network through the promotion and creation of regional, borough and local bridle route networks within the framework of the development of the RoWIP.

The Strategy sets out 9 objectives in order to achieve the aim, and these are encapsulated in an action plan which sets out indicators of success and how these will be measured.

3.2.2.13 Delivering Cycling Improvements in Newcastle, A ten year strategy (2011-2022)

The policies in this document have been developed in conjunction with the Newcastle Cycling Forum, which is supported by the City Council, and includes representatives of the transport charity Sustrans, national and local cycling organisations (CTC, Newcastle Cycling Campaign), Bicycle User Groups and members of the public.

Vision: Cycling should be seen as a normal, everyday thing to do. It is a safe, sensible, cheap and healthy, form of transport. On a daily basis, this means that families who now routinely use the car to travel distances of two to three miles, say for the school run or to work, use their bikes instead, if not every day, then at least some of the time. At weekends, individuals, groups and families will routinely go on leisure rides to the outer city and beyond, knowing they will be well provided for.

Aims: The overarching aim is to develop a cycling culture where 20% of all trips under five miles are undertaken by cycle by 2021. This will contribute towards making the city cleaner, more competitive and its people healthier. Cycling will also contribute to the economic growth of the city by cutting congestion and giving people more reliable journeys to work. It will also contribute to our aim of having a low carbon, energy resilient economy. Individuals who cycle will benefit from being healthier, less stressed, more productive at work and less likely to fall ill.

In order to achieve these aims, a number of objectives and policy measures have been set out around improving the cycle network; policy planning and development control; integration with public transport; cycle parking; travel plans, training and encouragement; promotion and
marketing; consultation; enforcement; cycle tourism, safe cycling; resources; funding and monitoring.

**Objective A:** Delivering cycling to places of work, education and for short and medium trips and decrease level of cycling accidents.

**Objective B:** Develop and maintain existing infrastructure and put in place new infrastructure, including parking, to create a safe, convenient, direct and accessible cycling network.

**Objective C:** Increase the number of people cycling for leisure and health, especially as a family.

### 3.2.2.14 A Play Strategy for Newcastle upon Tyne (2007-2012)

The Strategy focuses on the aims and objectives for play provision in the City and how this can be linked to a child’s development.

The vision “Newcastle, a Playful City” is given form in the play pledge:

> We will strive to ensure that all the children in Newcastle have a childhood in which they can play freely and safely in a range of good quality play environments, which offer challenge and stimulus. The right of children to play freely will be valued, respected and actively promoted across the City.

The consultation carried out as part of the study led to the following strategic aim and objectives:

**Strategic Aim:** To improve the understanding of parents, carers, service providers and practitioners of how children and young people learn in order to promote and develop good quality play opportunities.

- **Objective 1** To strive towards every child and young person in Newcastle having access to good quality green play spaces within easy walking distance of their homes, which meet their needs for variety, accessibility, choice, open space, adventure and other play aspirations.
- **Objective 2** To maximise the participation of children and young people, local communities, in the provision, management and evaluation of play provision in their neighbourhoods.
- **Objective 3** To ensure that children and young people with disabilities have access to the widest possible range of play opportunities and that play in Newcastle conforms, at a minimum to the requirements set out in the Disability Discrimination Act.
- **Objective 4** To provide a range of play opportunities in the built environment, city parks, natural spaces (managed or wildlife) open spaces, woodlands, riverside and other areas used for play where risk is managed.
- **Objective 5** To agree standards and performance indicators for play and use these to improve provision across the City; ensure that relevant training is available to practitioners involved in the delivery of services to children and young people.
- **Objective 6** To organise the resources of Play to provide a clear framework for investment, action, workforce development and partnership working.
 Objective 7 To improve the awareness of play amongst policy makers and the public so as to promote good quality play as a right that fosters children and young people’s growth, learning and development.

 Objective 8 To communicate effectively about all aspects of play with the public, including “hard to reach groups”, play providers, internal and external partners and other organisations with the aim of improving the quality of provision and participation.

3.2.2.15 Our Land: The Newcastle Allotment Strategy 2010-2015 (adopted October 2010)

The council and the Allotments Working Group have developed an allotment strategy to ensure that Newcastle is a leading provider of allotments in the country.

Vision Statement:

Our vision is the establishment in Newcastle upon Tyne of the adequate availability of easily accessible allotments with high quality amenities; in pursuance of excellence in the production and showing of vegetables, fruit and flowers via allotment gardening and driven by the current pioneering system of devolved management.

We support the allotment tradition of innovative individualism, but in conjunction with the provision of a socially inclusive sense of community and the facilitation of community projects. We believe that allotment gardening should be environmentally concerned, sustainable and wildlife friendly.

In order to achieve this vision, the Allotment Strategy has the following objectives:

- To recognise the multiple benefits of allotments for Newcastle residents, and for the City as a whole in terms of its future development guided by the Sustainable Communities Strategy, the Sustainable Cities Index and it’s WHO status as a Healthy City.
- To safeguard existing allotment provision and to increase allotment provision in Newcastle in line with known demand and with regard to future demand.
- To continue to improve the quality of allotment facilities for allotment holders in Newcastle and to continue to improve the quality of Newcastle’s innovative devolved allotment management.
- To recognise and promote the importance of allotments in environmental protection and sustainability, especially in relation to future threats of high food cost, fuel scarcity and climate change.
- To recognise the importance of biodiversity and to augment the role of allotments in preserving and enhancing biodiversity.

The strategy sets out 15 targets in order to achieve the objectives/vision. The Council are progressing towards the aims and targets in the strategy. The strategy will be revised in 2017/2018.
3.2.2.16 **Newcastle and North Tyneside Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)**

The BAP is a ten year vision for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in Newcastle and North Tyneside. The aim of the BAP is to ensure that the natural environment is managed more effectively to protect these natural resources and to leave a legacy that will benefit present and future generations.

The BAP consists of a series of plans and targets (up until 2021) for priority habitats and species in the Newcastle and North Tyneside area, which are considered to be under threat locally and nationally.

The action plans were chosen and developed by a steering group comprising of local experts to reflect the current concerns of different wildlife organisations. The partnership will continue to oversee the ongoing development and implementation of this BAP.

Priority habitats are: buildings and structures; estuary and coastal; brownfield land; transport corridors; open water and wetland; rivers and watercourses; managed urban green space; native woodland; lowland grassland; scrub, shrub and hedgerow.

Priority species are: amphibians, dingy skipper, otter, urban birds, water vole, red squirrel, hedgehog, slow worm, bumblebees, brown hare, farmland birds and bats.

3.2.2.17 **Newcastle’s Wildlife Enhancement Corridors (Sept 2013)**

The report sets out how a network of wildlife enhancement corridors will be created to link existing wildlife sites, underpinned by the aims and objectives of the Newcastle & North Tyneside Biodiversity Action Plan.

**Aims of the Enhancement Network:**

1. Create a spatial wildlife network around existing statutory and policy protected features, including designated wildlife sites, parks and public open space, sports fields, allotments and the green belt.
2. Audit the quality of the land within the Wildlife Enhancement Corridors for biodiversity. Identify areas that can be enhanced through development or management. Selection criteria for designation that measures the existing and potential value of the features within the network. This will include protected sites and/or species, BAP target habitats and species, public green space, and areas with potential for enhancement through development and regeneration.
3. Target management of habitats or species identified by this audit through the planning process.
4. Develop supporting biodiversity guidelines for wildlife protection and enhancement and adopt as DPDs. This document will interpret technical details of the BAP and will instruct on what should be done on the ground and why contributions are required. It will also include best practice examples of biodiversity, practical habitat creation, green roofs, sustainable drainage systems and possibly a biodiversity checklist to aid self-implementation.
5. Install policies through the Local Development Framework (LDF) which reflect the BAP and current government policy. Enhancement would require reasonable and appropriate contributions from developers.

A baseline map has been produced with all existing green space, in order to provide a robust footing on which to build Newcastle’s new wildlife enhancement network. Core wildlife areas were identified, and network links were identified and plotted between the core areas. Potential buffers, links and stepping stones were mapped/created to produce large habitat areas, and to create a functional wildlife enhancement network. These areas were ranked/scored and assigned a priority status or red amber or green depending on their score. Outside the network, wildlife habitats and sites will continue to be managed and protected.

3.2.2.18 Tree Strategy (adopted June 2002)

The Tree Strategy for Newcastle upon Tyne sets out how the council will protect and care for Newcastle’s trees, hedges and woodlands and how it hopes to plant more trees, in suitable places, to help improve Newcastle’s environment.

It states “We want a city with a diversity and abundance of healthy, attractive trees, cared for and managed to a high standard. We want Newcastle’s tree cover to be increasing, not declining, particularly as we try to adjust to the predicted change in climate”.

The council’s aims are threefold:

- protect the trees we have
- care for them
- plant more trees

A five year action plan for the period 2008-2012 has been produced and is concerned with finding ways to secure effective management of the tree stock and to achieve a modest increase in tree cover. It identifies ways to improve the contribution of trees to the well-being of the people who live or work in Newcastle, or who visit the city, to benefit wildlife, to respond to the challenge of climate change and to promote the character and distinctiveness of Newcastle as the regional capital.

3.2.2.19 Bee Strategy (2010)

Newcastle City Council’s Bee Strategy has been created to promote the importance of bees.

The aims and objectives of Newcastle’s Bee Strategy are:

- to raise awareness amongst the community.
- to adapt the local environment to provide the right conditions for all kinds of bees to increase.
3.2.2.20 Our Wellbeing for Life Strategy – A framework for action 2013-2016 and our commitments to shared change 2013-2014

This is the first strategy of the Wellbeing for Life Board (Newcastle’s statutory Health and Wellbeing Board). The Strategy fulfils the statutory requirement for Newcastle City Council, NHS Newcastle West Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS Newcastle North East Clinical Commissioning Group to jointly prepare a ‘Health and Wellbeing Strategy’, and are joined by a number of full and active partners in the development of, and future work on The Wellbeing for Life Strategy.

It provides a framework for action for partners, other organisations, businesses and most importantly people who live, work or learn in the city - to think about how a difference can be made to the wellbeing and health of Newcastle’s people and communities.

It highlights that our wellbeing and health isn’t just about our genes, our age or the services we use, but that wellbeing and health is created through the economic, physical and social conditions in which we live out our lives. It recognises that these influences occur across many different settings, including in streets, in neighbourhoods and leisure environments. It recognises that by improving these conditions across different settings and in the city as a whole, sustainable improvements to everyone’s wellbeing and health can be made, potentially reducing reliance on services over time.

The overarching ambition is: People who live, work or learn in Newcastle equally enjoy positive wellbeing and good health.

Responses to the question ‘what helps wellbeing and health in Newcastle?’ included:

“In the open air... Heaton Park, Jesmond Dene, Leazes Park, Exhibition Park, Saltwell Park etc. We are spoilt for choice and so lucky and yet we take it all for granted. i.e. the hard work that goes on behind the scenes from the Gardeners, the Landscapers, the Wardens Etc. and the best part, all these places are FREE”

“The great parks and open spaces in the city. Love the Town moor, especially Park run on a Saturday morning. free, inclusive and friendly.”

It recognises that streets and neighbourhoods need to invite people to get out and about, be active, have fun, make friends with others, and access services easily when they need them. For this to happen they need to have clean air, be attractive to be in, feel safe and have good active travel routes and accessible transport links to the facilities that people want or need to use. They also need to provide a layout, shops, services, parks and green spaces that make active living and healthy eating easy to do.

Commitments to shared change include the following:

- As far as is possible, using existing development control and regulatory powers to enable healthy homes, places and lifestyles.
• Take opportunities to create active, inclusive travel routes and work with partners to improve accessibility of public transport.

3.3 Health and Deprivation Context

3.3.1 Introduction

Health inequalities and deprivation are key issues for Newcastle City Council. The health of people in Newcastle upon Tyne is generally worse than the England average. Deprivation is higher than average and about 27.4% (12,700) children live in poverty. Life expectancy for both men and women is also lower than the England average\(^4\).

There is a raft of evidence that highlights the health and wellbeing benefits of accessing green space and nature, and ‘green exercise’ and access to good quality open spaces is key to this. However, in certain parts of the city (largely in the most deprived areas), vandalism of open spaces and open space facilities e.g. play areas is a problem, and means that maintenance of open spaces is also a key issue for the City Council.

3.3.2 Know Newcastle website

Partners in Newcastle, led by the Wellbeing for Life Board, have committed to working together through a single policy approach, called the Newcastle Future Needs Assessment (NFNA). As a process, the NFNA provides an integrated, coherent and evidence-based means of partners working together to determine priorities in the city. The NFNA is the way in which the statutory responsibilities for undertaking a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment will be fulfilled, but it is also being developed to fulfill other requirements for assessments or evidence-based planning. A key element of the Newcastle Future Needs Assessment is Know Newcastle - a web-based city information resource - that includes statistical insights about people in the city.

Know Your City provides information about the people living in Newcastle and the factors that shape their wellbeing and health, drawing information from sources such as the Census 2011, ONS population projections, Newcastle’s Residents Survey and key health information etc.

The Measuring National Wellbeing project led by the Office for National Statistics has led to the inclusion of four questions on subjective wellbeing in the Annual Population Surveys in 2011/12 and 2012/13. Subjective wellbeing of Newcastle’s people compares unfavourably with both the English and the North East average, as shown in the table below.

\(^4\) file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/HealthProfile2015NewcastleuponTyne00CJ%20(2).pdf
Table 2 Subjective wellbeing (rating out of 10). Source: Annual Population Survey 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Newcastle</th>
<th>North East Average</th>
<th>English Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?”</td>
<td>7.34</td>
<td>7.37</td>
<td>7.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Overall, how worthwhile are the things that you do in your life?”</td>
<td>7.51</td>
<td>7.62</td>
<td>7.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?”</td>
<td>7.16</td>
<td>7.17</td>
<td>7.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?”</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Census 2011 gives insights into self-reported health of Newcastle’s residents. The self-reported health of Newcastle’s residents is more similar to the England averages than to North East averages, as shown in table 3 below.

Table 3 Self reported health. Source: Census 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Proportion Newcastle residents</th>
<th>Proportion North East residents</th>
<th>Proportion England residents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very good health</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good health</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair health</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad health</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very bad health</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.3 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Analysis

The Indices of Deprivation 2015 provide a set of relative measures of deprivation for small areas (Lower-layer Super Output Areas) 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; in practice most indicators in the Indices of Deprivation 2015 relate to the tax year 2012/13.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation combines information from the seven domains to produce an overall relative measure of deprivation.
Figure 5 below shows the IMD rank for each LSOA within Newcastle City, where 1 is most deprived and 10 is least deprived. This is overlain with the existing quality rank scores for all open spaces included within the quality audit (see appendix 4), to build a picture of the quality/condition of open space in relation to the level of deprivation.

**Figure 5**  
**IMD ranks in Newcastle City (by LSOA) with open space existing quality ranks (where A are the highest quality sites, and sites ranked D are poor quality)**

As can be seen from figure 5, generally the poorer quality sites (with a rank score of C or D) are in the parts of the city with the higher levels of deprivation (with an IMD decile of 1-4). However, there are exceptions to this, with a number of sites with an existing quality rank of B (good), situated in some of the most deprived parts of the city (i.e. those areas with an IMD decile of 1).
4.0 LOCAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT (STEP 1)

4.1 Introduction

This study examines local need for a wide range of different types of recreational open space. It draws upon a range of survey and analytical techniques including a review of consultation findings from relevant studies, questionnaire surveys and one to one stakeholder interviews. The work was undertaken between January to April 2016. The full Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report and detailed findings are available as an appendix (1).

Questionnaire surveys were undertaken looking at the adequacy of current provision in terms of the quantity, quality and access, in relation to the various typologies of open space. The surveys were:

- A postal general household survey (sent to 3000 households, with 461 surveys completed)
- A survey of parish councils
- Local groups and organisations’ survey
- Survey of sports national governing bodies and local sports clubs.

In addition to the above a series of one to one stakeholder interviews were undertaken.

The results of this consultation and other analyses will help amongst other things to inform the content of the recommended local standards. Crucially it has also helped the study to understand local people’s appreciation of open space, sport and recreation facilities, and the wider green infrastructure and the values attached by the community to the various forms of open spaces and facilities. This section summarises key findings under 5 sections:

1. General Community Consultation
2. Parks, green spaces, countryside, and rights of way
3. Children and Young People - play and youth facilities
4. Informal sports – outdoor (non-pitch)
5. Neighbouring local authorities and parish councils

4.2. General Community Consultation – Key Findings

Quantity

The typologies where a majority of respondent households suggest there is a shortfall are:

- Wildlife areas and nature reserves (60%); and country parks, local countryside and woodlands (59%)
- Play areas and outdoor youth facilities (55%)
- Informal open spaces for ball games, picnics, hobbies, dog walking etc. (52%)
- Footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths (51%)
Over 60% of households think that overall there are enough tennis/netball courts; and bowling greens.

Smaller majorities think that in general there are enough Multi-Use Games Areas (59%); water recreation facilities (58%); and local recreation grounds (54%).

**Quality**

For all kinds of outdoor facilities/open spaces a majority of households suggested that in general they are of average or better quality. However, for some typologies there were notable levels of dissatisfaction with general levels of quality.

- 59% of households highlighted the overall quality of outdoor facilities for teenagers as being either poor or very poor.
- 51% rated the quality of Multi-Use Games Areas as poor or very poor; and 44% similarly for tennis/netball courts.

By contrast, some kinds of facilities/open spaces are rated relatively highly by significant numbers in terms of quality.

- Parks and gardens (56% rate quality in general as being good or very good);
- Country parks/countryside/woodlands (42% similarly);

**Access (geographical)**

Respondents are more likely than not (55%) to drive to country parks, countryside and woodland. Of the transport options driving is also the most common means of getting to wildlife areas/nature reserves (48%); and water recreation sites (45%).

However, walking is the norm for all of the other typologies most notably local recreation grounds (83%); teen facilities (80%); play areas (74%); and allotments (73%).

For a significant number of households public transport is important in relation to accessing some kinds of open space; for example water recreation sites (21%), wildlife areas/nature reserves (17%), and country parks, countryside and woodland (16%).

Cycling is a significant form of transport used for accessing MUGAs (18%) and youth facilities (11%). When combined with walking the totals for non-motorised access to these facilities are 76% and 91% respectively. In addition 9% of teenagers also travel by public transport to access youth facilities.

Nearly 17% of households reported that they did have access to a car for transport.

A large proportion (56%) of users are prepared to travel more than 20 minutes to visit Country parks, countryside and woodlands. Significant numbers are also willing to travel that long to
visit other kinds of open spaces/facilities, for example: a wildlife area/nature reserve. (50%); and areas for water recreation (48%).

In contrast, for significant numbers of residents, facilities need to be much more locally accessible before they will be used (for example, play areas, recreation grounds and allotments).

- 44% of users would expect allotments to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 15% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.
- 44% of users would expect play areas to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 23% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.
- 40% of users would expect local recreation grounds to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 2% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.

Over 85% of households confirmed that they would be prepared to walk/cycle further if the quality of the route was improved and that if the quality of the route was improved they would make the journey more often.

Priorities and other issues

- The categories highlighted by the largest number of households as a high priority for potential improvement/new provision were parks and gardens (59%); better footpaths, bridleway and cyclepath provision (58%); and country parks, accessible countryside/woodlands (52%).
- Other notable high priorities for improvement noted by significant numbers were nature reserves/wildlife areas (47%); informal open spaces as high priorities for improvement (47%); and children’s play areas (46%).
- Improvements in the provision of local recreation grounds also scored quite highly as a priority need (a combined high/medium priority choice for 86% of households - 51% medium/35% high).
- In the main households tended to suggest that improvements to existing open space facilities rather than new provision was most needed.
- The only categories where high numbers of households (over 40%) identify a primary need for more facilities are MUGAs (49%) and provision for teenagers (42%).
- For other typologies quality improvements to existing provision is clearly the more common kind of improvement need suggested most notably parks and gardens (64%); informal open spaces (63%) and tennis courts (60%).
- Providing opportunities for physical activity by developing and maintaining appropriate facilities such as sports and leisure centres, parks and open spaces is very important in relation to promoting better public health and reducing health inequalities.
- Some sectors of the community face particular barriers to access such as disabled people; children and young people; and those in the more deprived wards of the study area.
4.3 Parks, Green Space, Countryside and Rights of Way - Key Findings

Overview

- Natural England stress the need to take into account the ANGst standard as a starting point for developing a standard for natural and semi natural green space. Variations from this standard should be justified.
- The Woodland Trust Woodland Access Standard (WASt - endorsed by Natural England) provides guidance on access to Woodland, which should be taken into consideration.
- Council officers consulted would like a mechanism for discussing the outcomes of this Open Space Study and to be involved in strategic options that may result.
- It is hoped that evidence gathered through this Open Space Study will be used as a framework to produce a comprehensive strategy for the effective management/development of open spaces that meet the needs of the community now and in the future (to update the existing Green Space Strategy).
- The Green Space Strategy (2004) sets out a number of standards which have been reviewed as part of the main open space study.
- The importance of partnership working, including volunteer engagement, in delivering funding and management of open space is highlighted.
- The importance of biodiversity, ecological networks and the health and wellbeing benefits associated with access to good quality open space were key issues highlighted throughout the consultation.

Quantity

Community groups survey:

- 69% of community groups feel there are enough open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities to meet the needs of their primary activities.
- However, a significant minority (30%) feel there is inadequate provision e.g. Newcastle Mountain Bike Club, YMCA Walker, Food Nation, Darley Place Residents Unite, West End Women’s and Girls Centre, Durham Badger Group, Butterfly Conservation and Leazes Park Angling Association.

Household Survey:

The typologies where a majority of respondent households suggest there is a shortfall (i.e. there is a need for more) are:

- Wildlife areas and nature reserves (60%); and country parks, local countryside and woodlands (59%)
- Informal open spaces for ball games, picnics, hobbies, dog walking etc. (52%)
- Footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths (51%)
Small majorities think that in general there are enough:

- Parks and gardens (48%)
- Local recreation grounds (54%)
- Water recreation (58%)
- Allotments (48%)

**Quality**

**Overview:**

- Resources for the management and maintenance of council open space have been severely reduced over recent years and this is having an impact on the maintenance of sites/facilities.
- Quality of sites varies throughout Newcastle City. Key issues include dog, waste, litter and vandalism. Information and signage, water quality and biodiversity/connectivity have also been highlighted as key issues.

**Community group survey:**

- Parks and recreation grounds proved the highest rating typology with 38% of groups happy with the quality of provision (rating them as good or very good). However, a significant majority (31%) think they are adequate and 16% think they are poor or very poor.
- Typologies with the majority of groups rating them as adequate are country parks (38%), footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths (42%), and other green spaces (35%).
- 27% of groups rated wildlife areas as good or very good, however, the majority rated them as poor (31%).
- For water recreation, 15% of groups think the quality is good, 19% adequate, 19% poor, and the majority have no opinion (42%).

**Access**

**Household survey:**

- 87% of households confirmed that they would be prepared to walk/cycle further if the quality of the route was improved
- 90% also said that if the quality of the route was improved they would make the journey more often.

**Stakeholder consultation and Community groups survey:**

- The majority of community groups (54%) reported that they do not suffer from access issues, however a significant proportion (38%) noted that they do suffer from access issues.
- Access issues highlighted are predominantly regarding the connectivity and maintenance (quality) of Public Rights of Way.
• There is a need to improve pedestrian and cycle provision – generally around the quality of existing routes and connectivity.
• There is particularly poor provision for horse riders.
• It was highlighted that the promotion of existing routes could be improved.
• Council officers, Stakeholders and community groups have a number of aspirations for improved provision of rights of way.

4.3 Children and Young People - Key Findings

Quantity

• A majority (55%) of respondents to the household survey believe that overall across the Newcastle area there is insufficient provision of both play spaces and youth facilities.
• This finding is underlined by both the children and young people and play and youth organisations surveys where over 65% highlight the same need for both aspects of provision.
• A clear majority (over 65%) of play/youth organisations specifically highlight a need for more youth shelters/hang out areas, teen facilities (e.g. wheeled sports) and Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs).
• 59% of responses from the children and young people’s survey highlight a need for more spaces for informal and natural play.

Quality

• In general residents are reasonably happy with the quality of equipped play areas overall across the City area (68% of the household respondents rated them as being at least adequate of which 33% rated them as good or very good). However, 88% of respondents to the children and young people’s survey do not think that play areas are of good quality.
• The quality of youth facilities in general is less highly rated by households - 69% of households say that facilities are either poor or very poor (of which 17% rate them as very poor). 71% of children and young people do not think that youth facilities are of good quality.
• Newcastle's grass kickabout areas score the highest satisfaction levels with local play and youth groups, with 62% rating them as being either good or very good.
• A majority of local organisations rated equipped play areas and wild natural areas as at least adequate. 38% rated wild natural areas as good or better; but only 13% rated play areas as good.
• The ratings for the quality of youth shelters/outdoor meeting spaces for teens and skateboard/wheeled sports was particularly low in the opinion of youth organisations. 90% rated the former as either poor/very poor and 80% similarly for the latter.
Access

- 44% of households who use play spaces would expect them to be accessible within a 10 minute walk time, of which 4% would not wish to walk more than 5 minutes.
- 73% of households who use youth facilities would expect them to be accessible within a 15 minute walk time, of which 28% would not wish to walk more than 10 minutes.
- 90% of children and young people in the youth survey said that they would be prepared to walk further than normal to somewhere that had more to do and was more interesting.

Priorities for improvement

Children and young people survey

- 63% of children and young people highlighted improvements to local equipped playgrounds as being one of their top 3 priorities (of which 43% chose it as their top priority).
- 50% chose improvements to parks as being one of their top 3 priorities (of which 12% chose it as their top priority).
- Other commonly prioritised spaces/facilities were youth shelters (25%); play areas with more challenging equipment for teenagers (21%); and wild natural areas (19%).

Play and youth organisation survey

- The most commonly highlighted priority for improvement from play and youth organisations is "play areas with more challenging teen equipment" (60% highlight this as one of their top 3 priorities).
- Following this the next most common are equipped play areas (54%) and youth shelters/outdoor teen meeting spaces (42%)
- Other common high priorities are adventure/wild play spaces (36%) and MUGAs (30%).

Other Issues / General Observations

- Stakeholders highlight the importance of ensuring that when new play spaces and youth facilities are developed, or investment made into improvements, it is essential to ensure that ongoing budgetary provision is sufficient for maintenance.
- Many stakeholders highlight the importance of involving children and young people in all aspects of play and youth facility provision e.g. location, the kind of provision most needed, design, access issues etc.
- Children and teenagers play and hang out regularly “on the street”, on amenity and natural green space, near local shops, etc. as well as on spaces specifically planned for play and youth facilities. The study should therefore highlight planning related issues
aimed at making the wider open space and residential environment more child-friendly.

- A key barrier to teenagers’ use of “public” open space is that they are often moved on by nearby residents and authorities such as the police. They need more tolerance and places recognised as “theirs”.
- Play England provide excellent guidance on play and spatial planning; play space design; a Quality Assessment Tool for play spaces; and managing risk in play. Some of these could be adopted as guidance and Supplementary Planning Documents.

4.4 Non-pitch outdoor sports - Key Findings

General points and observations

Range of informal sports and recreation activities making use of open space

In general, the amount of activity detailed demonstrates the range of informal outdoor sport and recreation taking place in the Newcastle City area and the value of the open space facilities and resources which are used. All the trends suggest that use of outdoor space for health and fitness activities is growing – and there is tremendous scope for the greater linking and development of outdoor resources to serve this market (see below).

Growing importance of linkages between health and fitness and active recreation

With changes in public health management and revenue streams, linking fitness, active recreation and health can access new areas of funding; moreover, the advantages to community health in increasing fitness levels is now receiving political support. Many initiatives and opportunities are possible: e.g. the idea of linking sports sites with trim trails, outdoor fitness equipment etc. (using sports facilities as a base and green infrastructure and open space as resources). Associated with this, there is rapidly growing activity and demand for ‘individual fitness activities’ - walking, running and cycling, using existing facilities and open space resources.

Sports Specific Points

Tennis

- Newcastle has been identified as a focus local authority linked to the LTA 2015-2018 Participation Strategy.
- Because Newcastle is a focus area, facility investment can be explored, linked to the national LTA strategy e.g. LTA funding is earmarked for Exhibition Park and Gosforth Central Park.
- Quantity: overall the LTA believe that there are enough tennis facilities in the Newcastle area but note that the west of the city has been identified as a potential area with growing population/new housing.
- Quality: the LTA note that majority of the Newcastle based clubs are "in a good position for tennis provision". However they note that "Benwell Hill Tennis Club is struggling for members/users and their facility is in very poor state".
• Access: The LTA note that access to clubs is generally good but that "visibility/awareness of location could be improved". They highlight that access in parks for tennis is good but note that many find costs at the Leisure Centres to be prohibitive.

• Parks: the LTA note that they wish to work towards maximising the use of park sites to increase regular participation through the development of partnerships with the Council and other providers.

• The LTA also wishes to "inspire and engage more disabled people in tennis, and develop a stronger infrastructure and tennis network for disabled players".

**Bowls**

• Overall it appears that there are enough outdoor bowling greens to meet demand in the Newcastle area. The primary task is maintaining the current level of bowling greens rather than there being a need for additional greens.

• There are around 12 clubs in the Newcastle area and approximately 240 bowlers. It may be that, to ensure sustainability, a further review of facility provision is needed.

• The quality of greens is generally reasonable but many club houses are of poor quality and too small. A shortage of car parking is a problem for many clubs.

• Bowls England in its Whole Sport Plan sets out that its aim is to target those over 55 and disabled participants aged 16+.

• There is potential for club development and increased membership given the age demographic of the City Council area.

• The Newcastle area has a high population of over 55’s and in some neighbourhood poor health is common for that age group. Participation in bowls provision can be an important element in improving health and wellbeing for older people.

**Netball**

• The priorities in relation to netball facilities in the Newcastle area are for indoor rather than outdoor courts.

• There are 39 venues in Tyne and Wear being used for netball activity. Collectively, these venues have 28 outdoor courts, 9 of which are floodlit, 3 outdoor covered courts and 45 indoor courts.

• There is an increasing demand for indoor facilities as the average recreational netballer prefers to play indoors and there is a requirement for performance programmes to be based at high quality indoor venues.

• The most important facilities for outdoor netball in Newcastle are Kenton School, Walbottle Campus and Great Park Community Centre. Providing floodlights at Kenton School would be extremely useful for netball development. The surface on the courts at Walbottle Campus "isn’t great and can be quite slippery". The court at Great Park is smaller than a full size court but is floodlit.

• The Newcastle Netball Development Officer notes that "it would be nice to have some suitable netball courts in parks so that we could engage with ParkLives but at the moment none of the surfaces are suitable".
In the Tyne and Weir County Netball Plan two facilities (both in Newcastle) are highlighted as being of particular importance: Blue Flames, Whitley Park and the University of Northumbria. The plan notes that the indoor courts at Blue Flames are currently inadequate.

Quality - three quarters of clubs believe changing facilities to be inadequate for their needs. 24% of clubs rate the condition of venues as very good, with remaining given a good or average rating.

The development of netball facility projects is largely reliant on the sourcing of capital grants from external agencies/associations. England Netball has very limited capital funding and this is reserved for national and regional priority projects.

4.5 Neighbouring Local Authorities and Parish Councils – Key Findings

Neighbouring Local Authorities – Cross Boundary Issues

Section 6.1 of the Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report briefly reviewed feedback from neighbouring Local Authorities in relation to the status of their open space strategies/associated studies and any cross border issues of significance. The variety of documents and strategies in place (and their relevance to current planning policy) is considerable, embracing green infrastructure studies, open space strategies, and sport, recreation and play strategies. The approach adopted by each authority is very much locally derived.

It is notable that many authorities are currently involved with commissioning new open space related studies or updating previous strategies that are out of date.

There is scope for neighbouring local authorities to work more together to make the most of accessible natural green space resources and to develop some common themes and agendas. It is suggested that much could be learnt in regard to best practice by better sharing of information between authorities and ensuring that local authority strategies afford some importance to considering developments and proposals in neighbouring authorities.

Parish Councils

Section 6.2 of the Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report provided findings from the parish councils survey undertaken for the study. Five of the six parish councils responded to the survey (Hazlerigg being the exception).

General Overview

The individual parishes are quite different in relation to size, demographics, geography, needs and demand/aspirations. It is important that the study takes this variation into account.

Three of the five town/parish councils who responded were directly responsible for the management of various local spaces and facilities (Dinnington, North Gosforth and Woolsington).
Three of the 5 local councils who responded noted that there was a need for additional or improved open space, play and recreation facilities within their town or parish (Blakelaw, Brunswick and Dinington).

The sector of the community most commonly identified as being poorly served in relation to their needs were children and young people.

**Common areas of concern**

For the parish councils, the areas of most common concern are:

- A need for additional allotment plots.
- Not enough areas for teenagers e.g. skateparks, shelters etc. and the quality of existing play areas.
- A need for improvements to parks and recreation grounds
- A need for improvements to the rights of way network.

**Quality considerations**

- They should be safe and secure for those using them.
- They should be easy to get to (and get around within) for all members of the community.
- There should be adequate opportunities for dog walking (and freedom from dog fouling).

Other aspects of quality specifically highlighted included:

- Equipment and grounds should be of high quality and well maintained - they should be clean and free from litter and graffiti.
- They should have a range of facilities and be "multi-functional" providing for all sectors of the community.
- They should provide a contribution to biodiversity and wildlife.
- There should be good footpath and cycleway links to and between them.
- There should be control of noise and unsocial behaviour.

**Detailed responses on open space typologies**

Many of the parish councils provided detailed responses relating to aspects of quantity and quality of the various elements of open spaces surveyed. These responses can be found in the excel spreadsheet associated with the consultation report.

**4.6 Concluding remarks**

The survey work, stakeholder consultation, desk-based research and group sessions have highlighted a wide range of issues of value to the Open Space Study. There is a strong degree of consistency across the various sources on key areas of local need and aspiration from which
we can be confident that the findings are robust and reliable, providing a strong evidence base to be combined with the detailed facilities audit.

The findings and evidence highlighted in the Community and Stakeholder Consultation report will feed into:

- the development of green space policy statements; and
- the recommended standards for typologies of green spaces (quantity, quality and access elements).
5.0 AUDIT OF EXISTING OPEN SPACE ASSETS

5.1 General approach

This section sets out the proposed typologies which will have standards developed or have been included within the quantitative or access analysis. The typologies of open space have drawn on guidance provided within PPG17, and through discussions with the project Steering Group. The agreed list of typologies are seen to be locally derived and appropriate for the type and range of open spaces that exist within Newcastle City.

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, natural green space, parks and recreation grounds and allotments may all provide numerous functions such as providing space for recreation, habitat for wildlife conservation, flood alleviation, improving air quality, and providing food growing opportunities.

The following typologies are proposed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typologies mapped with standards</th>
<th>Typologies mapped but no standards&lt;sup&gt;5&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Allotments</td>
<td>• Education sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Amenity Green Space (&gt;0.15ha)</td>
<td>• Churchyard and Cemetery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Natural Green Space</td>
<td>• Amenity (Roadside)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Park and Recreation Grounds:</td>
<td>• Amenity Green Space (&lt;0.15ha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Outdoor sports space (Pitches)</td>
<td>• Outdoor Sports Space (Private)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Outdoor Sports Space (Fixed)</td>
<td>• Private Space e.g. paid access sites, private gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Play Space (Children)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Play Space (Youth)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<sup>5</sup> An explanation for not developing standards for these typologies is outlined in the following sections
5.1.1 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:

“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”

(n.b. 40 Poles equals 1,210 square yards or 1,012 square metres. A Pole can also be known as a Rod or Perch.)

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.
5.1.2 Amenity Green Space

The category is considered to include those spaces (minimum 0.15ha in size) 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 lain 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 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.

It should be noted that amenity green spaces smaller than 0.15 ha and amenity roadside verges were 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 open space provision (see section 5.1.8 below).
5.1.3 Natural Green Space

For the purpose of this study, natural and semi-natural green space covers a variety of partly or wholly accessible spaces including meadows, woodland and copses all of which share a trait of having natural characteristics and wildlife value, but which are also open to public use and enjoyment.

Research elsewhere (Natural England) and the local consultation for this study have identified the value attached to such space for recreation and emotional well-being. A sense of ‘closeness to nature’ with its attendant benefits for people is something that is all too easily lost in urban areas. Natural Green spaces can make important contributions towards local Biodiversity Action Plan targets and can also raise awareness of biodiversity values and issues. Some sites will have statutory rights or permissive codes allowing the public to wander in these sites. Others may have defined Rights of Way or permissive routes running through them. For the remainder of sites there may be some access on a managed basis.

Natural Green Spaces can form important ‘green corridors’ for both wildlife and people, especially when linked with the public rights of way network, cycle paths and rivers etc. These spaces form an important part of the Green Infrastructure of an area, and can be important in delivering ecosystem services and attracting visitors across administrative boundaries.

Many natural spaces may not be ‘accessible’ in the sense that they cannot be entered and used by the general community, but they can be appreciated from a distance, and contribute to visual amenity. Although such spaces are not the subject of standards developed by this study, their value is recognised.

A combined standard for amenity green space and natural green space is recommended for assessing the requirements for new provision (see section 6.3 and 6.6). Existing provision of natural green space is analysed using the Natural England Accessible Natural Green Space (ANGST) Standard (see section 6.6), which only considers sites above 20ha. The importance of smaller (<20ha) natural green spaces for informal recreation and wildlife/habitat conservation is recognised, however the supply of these smaller sites has not been analysed as part of this study. Tables 5, 6 and 7 provide quantity figures for accessible natural green space.
5.1.4 Park and Recreation Grounds

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. The consultation undertaken indicated that people refer to their local park or rec, and communities do not make a distinction between outdoor sports space and parks and recreation grounds. Therefore, for the study an overarching typology for Park and Recreation Grounds has been used comprising three elements:

- **Park and Recreation Ground.** This comprises the general open space surrounding play areas, sports facilities etc. used for general recreation.
- **Outdoor Sports Space (Pitches).** This comprises publicly accessible sports pitches (including football and rugby).
- **Outdoor Sports Space (Fixed).** This comprises all other non-pitch based provision including publicly accessible tennis courts and bowling greens.

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
- Dog walking

The multi-functional approach to mapping has provided detail to the range of functions that exist within parks and recreation grounds, with all outdoor sport and play facilities being
mapped (see section 2.3.2). This has meant that more accurate assessment of these facilities can be undertaken.

The recommended standards for this typology (set out in Section 6 below) are intended to provide sufficient space. The Playing Pitch Strategy deals with some of the detail i.e. supply of pitches and how they will be laid out.

5.1.5 Play Space (Children and Youth)

It is important to establish the scope of the study in terms of this kind of 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, Multi-use Games Areas 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.

The study has recorded the following:

- **Children’s Play Space** – Areas of play that cater for the needs of children up to and around 12 years. Play Areas are an essential way of creating safe but adventurous places for children of varying ages to play and learn. The emphasis in play area management is shifting away from straightforward and formal equipment such as slides and swings towards creating areas where imagination and natural learning can flourish through the use of landscaping and natural building materials and the creation of areas that need exploring.

- **Youth Play Space** - informal recreation opportunities for, broadly, the 13 to 16/17 age group, and which might include facilities like skateboard parks, basketball courts 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.

Teenagers should not be ignored, it is important to create areas for ‘hanging out’ such as shelters and providing them with things to do such as bike ramps. Currently recognisable provision for teenagers is few and far between.

5.1.6 Churchyards

The city has many 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, particularly closed churchyards. 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 have been identified and mapped where known, however, no quantity or access standard for provision have been set, as it is outside the scope of this study to make recommendations related to requirements for new provision.

However, the quality of churchyards can be influenced by this study, particularly closed churchyards which have become the responsibility of the Local Authority. This reflects the priorities established through consultation, which identifies the need to provide and improve open spaces. Churchyards can provide important open space, particularly closed churchyards, where the ownership is often transferred to the local authority to manage and maintain.

5.1.7 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 and in many cases 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.

Quantity and access standards have not been 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 City Council to influence their provision and management. However, their existence is still an important factor of local provision, and as such they will be subject to the same policy considerations as publicly accessible space.
5.1.8 Amenity (Roadside) and Amenity Green Space (<0.15ha)

The minimum size of a space that will be considered acceptable and count towards open space provision is recommended to be 0.15 ha in size (about the size of a mini football pitch). This will avoid a proliferation of small amenity spaces which have no real recreation function. Roadside verges also have little or no recreational value, due to their size and/or access to them. Although no provision standards have been set (due to these spaces having no/limited recreational function), these small amenity spaces and roadside verges have been identified and mapped where known as they form part of the Green Infrastructure network and contribute to visual amenity.

5.1.9 Outdoor Sport (Private) - outdoor sports space with limited public access (e.g. private sports grounds), have also been recorded and mapped where known. Private sport space makes up an important part of outdoor sports provision across the city, and forms an important part of the community facilities. The private sports spaces have been mapped separately to publicly accessible sites, to determine exact provision of the different types of provision. Sub typologies include football, tennis, rugby, cricket, bowls and artificial turf pitch.

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. Golf courses have been identified and mapped where known, however, no quantity or access standard for provision have been set, as it is outside the scope of this study to make recommendations related to requirements for new provision.

5.1.10 Private Space e.g. paid access sites

During the audit of open space, a number of sites were identified which were in private ownership, largely these sites were not openly accessible to the public and required payment or membership to access them. This typology also includes sites where access is restricted to immediate residents only, and are generally fenced off. This typology does not include private sports facilities (e.g. golf courses, bowling greens and tennis courts – which are covered elsewhere), but those open spaces which contribute to green infrastructure and the overall open space asset.
5.2 Existing provision of open space

5.2.1 Provision across the city

The following table shows the average existing provision of open space in hectares and ha/1000 population across the city. The figures for ‘Park and Recreation Ground (Combined)’ include a combination of the following typologies:

- Park and Recreation Ground;
- Outdoor Sport (Pitches);
- Outdoor Sport (Fixed).

Table 5 Summary of existing provision of open space across the city

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typology</th>
<th>Existing (Ha)</th>
<th>Existing (Ha/1000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allotments</td>
<td>75.41</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenity Green Space</td>
<td>226.1</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park and Recreation Ground (combined)</td>
<td>245.76</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park and Recreation Ground</td>
<td>199.85</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Sport (Fixed)</td>
<td>6.28</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Sport (Pitches)</td>
<td>39.63</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Sport (Private)</td>
<td>96.34</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play Space (Children)</td>
<td>7.86</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play Space (Youth)</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible Natural Green Space</td>
<td>825.37</td>
<td>2.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>330.83</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churchyards and Cemeteries</td>
<td>70.16</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2.2 Provision in Wards

Quantity Statistics

The following tables show the average existing provision of open space in hectares (table 6) and ha/1000 population (table 7) for each of the wards in the City.

Table 6 Existing provision of open space (hectares) in wards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Allotments</th>
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Maps showing provision by Ward

Appendix 2 provides a map for each of the wards within the City showing the provision of open space. An example map is shown in figure 6.

Figure 6  Example map showing existing provision of open space by ward (appendix 2)
6.0 THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS

6.1 Introduction

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 are proposed below. This section explains how the standards for Newcastle have been developed, and provides specific information and justification for each of the typologies where standards have been proposed.

The standards for open space have been developed in-line 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, existing good practice and from the views of the community and those that use the spaces. Again, quality standards should be achievable and reflect the priorities that emerge through consultation. A key issue for Newcastle City Council is maintenance of open spaces in deprived areas, where levels of vandalism can be high. This, coupled with the current financial climate (with large cut backs in government funding to Local Authorities) means that achievable quality standards are key, and they are likely to vary depending on the geographical area.

The standards that have been proposed are for **minimum guidance levels of provision**. So, just because geographical areas may enjoy levels of provision exceeding minimum standards does not mean there is a surplus, as all such provision may be well used.
6.2 Allotments

Table 8 Summary of quantity and access standard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantity Standard</th>
<th>Access Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.3 ha/1000 population</td>
<td>720 metres (15 minutes’ straight line walk time)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Existing national or local standards

National standards for allotments and other such open spaces are difficult to find. The closest thing 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
- Plotholders shed = 12sqm
- Greenhouse = 15sqm
- Polytunnel = 30sqm

The saved Unitary Development plan (UDP) requirements are 0.6ha of allotments per 1000 population. The City of Newcastle Public Green Space, Sport and Recreation Needs and Opportunities (2009) recommends an access standard of ‘ideally within 15 minutes walk or 10 minutes journey time from home’, although this is not adopted by the council. The saved UDP standards still apply.

Quantity standard for allotments

Quantity:

- 90% of all respondents from the household survey ‘never’ use allotments, meaning this is the least used type of open space;
- The existing average level of provision across the study area is 0.27 ha/1000;
- The household survey identified 35% of people felt there should be more allotments, however, 48% felt there are enough;
- Consultation with Council Officers highlight that all allotment sites are fully let and there are long waiting lists;
- Council Officers also highlight the need to consider the rationalisation of existing sites to improve the intensity of use as well as the need for new sites, when considering the use of S106 monies;
- The Allotment Strategy includes the objective ‘to safeguard existing allotment provision and to increase allotment provision in Newcastle in line with known demand and with regard to future demand’.
- The propensity for higher density new housing with smaller gardens is likely to increase demand;
• With this in mind, a marginal increase against the existing average level of provision is recommended. Therefore, a standard of 0.30 ha/1000 is proposed for analysing existing provision and for new provision.

• If development falls within an area with an undersupply of allotments (which would normally require new provision of allotments on-site), if it can be demonstrated that there is little/no demand for new provision e.g. vacant plots on existing sites, then the priority would be to improve the quality of, and access to existing allotment sites.

**Access standard for allotments**

• Responses received in relation to acceptable travel times to allotments from the household survey identified a mix in responses, with 15% wanting allotments within 5 minutes, 29% between 6 to 10 minutes and 39% between 11 to 15 minutes; and that they access allotments by foot (73%).

• This suggests that people do not want to travel too far to reach their allotment;

• It is considered that the availability of allotments is more important than having them very close to home, nevertheless there is some demand for facilities relatively nearby. Therefore, a standard of no more than 15 minutes’ walk time (720 metres straight line walk) is proposed.

**Quality standards for allotments**

Few comments were received in relation to the quality of allotments, furthermore the information gathered in relation to allotments is more difficult to assess in comparison to other types of open space. The reason for this is twofold: Firstly, the number of people who actually use allotments is very low compared to the numbers who use other types of open space and, therefore specific comments related to the quality of allotments are less frequent; Secondly, the majority of allotments sites are locked, and the quality audit only allows for assessment against key criteria such as the level of cultivation and general maintenance, which is less comprehensive than the assessments of other open space.

For allotments, a number of general recommendations are made in relation to quality, which should include the following:

• 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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantity Standard</th>
<th>Access Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.8 ha/1000 population (sites &gt; 0.15ha) for analysing existing provision</td>
<td>600 metres or 12-13 minutes’ walk time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0 ha/1000 population (combined with natural green space) for analysing requirements from new development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Existing national or local standards

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, and a walking distance guideline of 480m. FIT recommend that the quantity guidelines are adjusted to take account of local circumstances.

The saved Unitary Development plan (UDP) requirements are 1.2ha of local open space per 1000 population. The Public Green Space, Sport and Recreation Addendum (2013) recommends standards specifically for amenity space of 0.2ha per 1000 population and that ‘Everyone in Newcastle should have access to good quality green space greater than 0.1 Ha within a 5 minute walk (400m) of their home, school or workplace’. Although this standard has not been adopted by the council.

Quantity standard for Amenity green space

- Existing average level of provision in the study area is 0.81 ha/1000 population (for sites greater than 0.15 ha in size);
- The household survey identified that 52% of people felt there was a need for more informal open space areas, whilst 43% felt there were enough;
- Provision varies greatly with some areas having no provision or falling well below the average, and others far exceeding it;
- The audit identified a proliferation of amenity green spaces, typical of “space left over after planning” which lacked recreational value and in some cases poor visual value;
- Considering the above factors, a minimum standard of 0.8 ha/1000 is recommended for analysing existing provision;
- It is recommended that a combined standard with natural green space of 1.0 ha/1000 is used for assessing requirements for new provision (section 6.6.), this is to provide new spaces that maximise opportunities for wildlife and are biodiverse, in accordance with the NPPF and local policy;
- The minimum size of a space that will be considered acceptable and count towards open space provision is recommended to be 0.15 ha in size (about the size of a mini football pitch). This will avoid a proliferation of small amenity spaces which have no
real recreation function. Any spaces below this size will be acceptable in terms of their visual amenity, but would not count towards the required level of provision.

**Access standard for amenity green space**

- Responses received in relation to acceptable travel times to informal open space from the household survey identified a mix in responses, with 33% expecting informal open spaces to be within a 10 minute travel time (of which 14% expecting to travel no more than 5 minutes) and a further 22% expecting to travel no more than 15 minutes; and that they access these spaces by foot (55%);
- Therefore, a recommended standard of 600 metres (12-13 minutes’ straight line walk time).

**Quality standards for amenity green space**

The audit of provision as well as the consultation has identified the importance attached by local people to open space close to home. The value of ‘amenity green space’ must be recognised especially within housing areas, where it can provide important local opportunities for play, exercise and visual amenity that are almost immediately accessible. On the other hand, open space can be expensive to maintain and it is very important to strike the correct balance between having sufficient space to meet the needs of the community for accessible and attractive space, and having too much which would be impossible 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.

It is therefore recommended that in addition to the minimum size threshold identified above (0.15ha), that 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;
- Include paths along main desire lines (lit where appropriate);
- Be designed to ensure easy maintenance.

### 6.4 Park and Recreation Grounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantity Standard</th>
<th>Access Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.8 ha/1000 population</td>
<td>720 metres (15 minutes’ straight line walk time)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Existing national and local policies**

The Fields in Trust (FIT) Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play report ‘Beyond the Six Acre Standard’ 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 saved Unitary Development Plan (UDP) requirements are 1.2ha of local open space per 1000 population. The Public Green Space, Sport and Recreation Addendum (2013) recommends standards specifically for larger green spaces at 1.0ha per 1000 population, and for access that ‘Everyone in Newcastle should have access to a good quality park, or larger natural space within 10 minute walk (800m) of their home, school or workplace’.

**Quantity of park and recreation grounds**

- Existing average level of provision in the study area is 0.88 ha/1000;
- There is an additional 0.34 ha/1000 of private sports space which includes a variety of uses (excluding Golf Clubs);
- The household survey identified the following in relation to this typology:
  - 48% of people felt there were enough parks and gardens and 54% felt there were enough local recreation grounds;
  - 63% felt there were enough outdoor bowling greens;
  - 65% felt there were enough tennis/netball courts;
- A proposed standard of 0.80ha/1000 is proposed for assessing existing provision and for assessing requirements for new provision of publicly accessible facilities (private facilities are not afforded protection under this study, as they are not covered by standards, however, they are afforded protection under separate policy – see section 8).
- It should be reiterated that this standard is intended to provide sufficient space. The Outdoor Sport and Playing Pitch Strategy deals with some of the detail i.e. supply of pitches and how they will be laid out.

**Access standard for park and recreation grounds**

- For parks and gardens, 45% of people want facilities to be within a 15 minute travel time; and for local recreation grounds, 74% of people would travel no more than 15 minutes;
- 64% of people walk to parks and gardens and 83% to local recreation grounds;
- A standard of 720 metres (15 minutes’ walk time) is therefore recommended.
Quality standards for park and recreation grounds

This type of provision was identified as one of the highest priority for improvement (along with footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths) within the study area. 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. For outdoor sports space, Sport England 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. The Rugby Football Union have provided guidance on the quality and standard of provision of facilities for rugby, and the England and Wales Cricket Board have provided guidance for cricket facilities. It is recommended that the guidance provided in these documents is adopted by the City Council, and that all new and improved provision seeks to meet these guidelines.

6.5 Play Space (children and youth)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typology</th>
<th>Quantity Standard</th>
<th>Access Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Play</td>
<td>0.02 ha/1000</td>
<td>600m (12-13 minutes’ straight line walk time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space</td>
<td>population</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Play Space</td>
<td>0.02 ha/1000</td>
<td>720m (15 minutes’ straight line walk time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>population</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Existing National and Local Policies

The FiT guidance ‘Beyond the Six Acre Standard’ 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). The guidance does not specifically cover the needs of most teenagers.

The previous FiT guidance (The Six Acre Standard) recommended provision of 0.8 hectares per 1000 people for children’s play of which around 0.3 hectares should be equipped provision. These standards had been criticised because they are often seen as undeliverable, and can result in a proliferation of play areas that can be difficult to maintain, as well as setting unrealistic aspirations in urban areas where insufficient land is available to provide facilities, especially higher density development on brownfield sites. The level recommended within the new guidance (0.25 ha/1000 population), although lower than previously, is still considered to be high.

The saved Unitary Development Plan (UDP) requirements are 5 sq.m of children’s play space per dwelling (only applies for dwellings with two or more bedrooms).
Quantity standards for play

- Current average levels of provision of children’s play space is 0.03 ha/1000 population, for youth space this is 0.01 ha/1000 population;
- The household survey identified that 55% of people felt there was a need for more children’s play space and youth facilities;
- It is therefore recommended that existing levels of youth play facilities are increased with a standard of 0.02 ha/1000.
- Following discussions with the Council, it is recommended that the level of children’s play space should be slightly reduced due to concerns regarding the sustainability of increasing provision. Therefore, the recommended standard for children’s play space is 0.02 ha/1000 for analysing existing provision and for new provision required from development. It is recommended that a Play Strategy is produced (see Section 8) to determine the priority sites for improvement and which sites (if any) may be suitable for decommissioning.
- It should be reiterated that these are minimum standards for equipped provision and do not include the need for surrounding playable space as recommended by Play England® i.e. this surrounding playable space will need to be provided in addition to the quantity standard.

Access standards for play

- The household survey identified that for children’s play space 44% of people want facilities within 10 minutes and a further 41% within 15 minutes. For teenage facilities 29% of people wanted facilities within 10 minutes, with a further 44% willing to travel up to 15 minutes;
- 74% of people walk to children’s facilities, and 80% walk to outdoor teenage facilities.

In light of these findings, the following access standards are recommended:

- Children’s provision – 600m (12-13 minutes’ straight line walk time),
- Youth Provision – 720m (15 minutes’ straight line walk time).

Quality standards for play

The household survey revealed notable levels of dissatisfaction with general levels of quality for outdoor facilities for teenagers (59% rated them as poor or very poor and 37% as average). This figure was less for children’s play areas, with 32% rating them as poor or very poor, 35% as average, and 32% as good.

Play England are keen to see a range of play spaces in all urban environments:

A Door-step spaces close to home
B Local play spaces – larger areas within easy walking distance
C Neighbourhood spaces for play – larger spaces within walking distance

6 Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces
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 has been recommended that both Council’s consider 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 KIDS* 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 Natural Green Space

For Natural Green Space, there are a number of national standards recommended by Natural England and the Woodland Trust, which are summarised below.

#### 6.6.1 Natural England Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGSt)

- at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometre 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 at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes’ walk) from home.

#### 6.6.2 Local standards

For this purpose of this study, it is recommended that the analysis should use the Natural England ANGSt standards to identify current levels of provision and gaps.

It is also recommended that local standards are adopted for providing new levels of provision through new development. It is recommended that this provision is considered in tandem with provision of amenity green space in new development. The aim would be to provide guidance for development to provide amenity/natural green spaces which have both a recreational value and biodiversity value through native planting. There should be a move away from providing numerous small amenity grass area, to providing fewer, larger amenity/natural spaces in new development. This is reflected in the natural green spaces standards below.

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7 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.
Table 12  Summary of natural provision standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typology</th>
<th>Quantity standards (ha/1000 population)</th>
<th>Access standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural Green Space</td>
<td>ANGST</td>
<td>ANGST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For assessing current and future provision</td>
<td>1.0 ha/1000 to include natural and amenity green space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.6.4  Quality of natural and semi-natural green space

Satisfaction levels with the quality of natural green space (country parks, local countryside, woodlands; and wildlife areas/nature reserves) are average, with around 45% of people in the household sample survey rating their quality as average. Natural green space was also noted as a high priority for improvement by significant numbers in the household survey. Consultation results also highlight the value attached to certain attributes of open space, in particular:

- Good maintenance and cleanliness
- Ease of access
- Lack of antisocial behaviour, noise etc.

This suggests that the provision of new or improved open space cannot be considered in isolation from the means of maintaining such space, perceptions of antisocial behaviour, and ease of access from within the surrounding environment.

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 wildlife value as part of a network.

In areas where it may be impossible or inappropriate to provide additional 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 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 native trees and plants with biodiversity value in high quality soft landscaping of new developments.

The above should in any event be principles to be pursued and encouraged at all times.

6.7 Summary of open space standards

Table 13 Summary of open space standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typology</th>
<th>Quantity standards (ha/1000 population)</th>
<th>Access standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allotments</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>720 metres or 15 minutes’ walk time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenity Green Space (sites &gt;0.15 ha)</td>
<td>0.8 for analysing existing provision</td>
<td>600 metres or 12-13 minutes’ walk time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.0 for new provision (see standard for Natural Green Space)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park and Recreation Grounds (public provision only)</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>720 metres or 15 minutes’ walk time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play Space (Children)</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>600 metres or 12-13 minutes’ walk time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play Space (Youth)</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>720 metres or 15 minutes’ walk time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Green Space</td>
<td>1.0 to include natural and amenity green space for new provision</td>
<td>ANGST for analysing existing provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total for new provision</td>
<td>2.14 ha/1000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.0 APPLYING LOCAL STANDARDS

7.1 Introduction

This part of the report uses the recommended standards to analyse provision across the study area. This section provides an overview of provision across the city and individual wards, with more detailed maps provided in appendix 2 and 3. This section includes:

**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 people.

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. Within this section, levels of provision are provided by ward.

**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 3.

**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 quality audit.
7.2 Application of quantity standards

7.2.1 Current supply against the Newcastle standards

Table 14 shows the existing supply (in hectares) of open space in hectares for each typology for each of the wards. The supply is calculated using the population figures for each ward, and the quantity of open space compared to what the requirements for open space are against the recommended standards\(^8\).

The figures of ‘Park and Recreation Grounds (Public Combined)’ includes a combination of the following typologies:

- Park and Recreation Ground;
- Outdoor Sport (Pitches);
- Outdoor Sport (Fixed).

\(^8\) For example, for Benwell and Scotswood the population is 11,391. The existing quantity of allotments within this ward is 6.20 ha, and the required provision (using the standard of 0.30ha/1000) is 3.42ha. Therefore, the resultant supply is 2.78ha i.e. there is sufficient supply against the quantity standard.
### Table 14: Supply by ward (hectares) against the Newcastle quantity standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Allotments</th>
<th>Amenity Green Space</th>
<th>Parks and Recreation Grounds (combined)</th>
<th>Parks and Recreation Grounds</th>
<th>Outdoor Sport (Fixed)</th>
<th>Outdoor Sport (Pitches)</th>
<th>Play (Child)</th>
<th>Play (Youth)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard</td>
<td>0.3 Ha /1000</td>
<td>0.8 Ha /1000</td>
<td>0.8 Ha /1000</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0.02 Ha /1000</td>
<td>0.02 Ha /1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur's Hill</td>
<td>-2.9</td>
<td>-6.17</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>11.96</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benwell &amp; Scotswood</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>-3.41</td>
<td>26.06</td>
<td>33.08</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blakelaw</td>
<td>-2.7</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>8.82</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byker</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>7.98</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Callerton &amp; Throckley</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>-5.19</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>18.39</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapel</td>
<td>-2.85</td>
<td>16.49</td>
<td>-3.63</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dene &amp; South Gosforth</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>9.18</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denton &amp; Westerhope</td>
<td>-2.41</td>
<td>6.73</td>
<td>-9.04</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elswick</td>
<td>-3.34</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>-4.16</td>
<td>7.46</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fawdon &amp; West Gosforth</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>-5.63</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gosforth</td>
<td>-1.27</td>
<td>-7.1</td>
<td>-4.6</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heaton</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>-9.15</td>
<td>14.88</td>
<td>23.87</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenton</td>
<td>-3.13</td>
<td>11.63</td>
<td>-4.08</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston Park South &amp; Newbiggin Hall</td>
<td>-2.25</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>9.78</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lemington</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>-2.37</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manor Park</td>
<td>-1.75</td>
<td>-5.63</td>
<td>-6.43</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monument</td>
<td>-2.74</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>11.91</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Jesmond</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>-2.63</td>
<td>-8.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ouseburn</td>
<td>-2.37</td>
<td>-4.59</td>
<td>-0.95</td>
<td>5.07</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parklands</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>-3.12</td>
<td>5.55</td>
<td>7.17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.53</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>-0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Jesmond</td>
<td>-1.31</td>
<td>-6.1</td>
<td>-6.87</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walker</td>
<td>-0.58</td>
<td>-7.6</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>8.84</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walkergate</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
<td>-7.33</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>7.19</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Fenham</td>
<td>-1.06</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>14.58</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wingrove</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>-8.35</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>9.73</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14 shows that provision varies across wards and typologies, with some meeting the standards and some falling below. For example, there is insufficient youth provision across the majority of wards. This will be an important consideration when determining the need for on-site open space in allocated housing sites.

Provision and access to accessible natural green space (against the Natural England Accessible Natural Green Space Standards) is considered under section 7.3.2. The quantity (in hectares) of accessible natural green space by ward is shown in table 6.

### 7.2.2 Future supply and need for open space

This section of the report considers the overall implications for open space provision from the predicted population growth (based on Core Strategy population projection) for Newcastle City. The projected population increase up to 2030 is 32,700 people.

**Impact of population growth on existing open space provision**

Table 15 shows the impact on the current supply of open space, if no new open space were provided on site as part of new housing developments. This has been calculated using the requirements for open space in Table 16.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typology</th>
<th>Existing Supply (Ha)</th>
<th>Resulting Supply (Ha) following a population increase of 32,700 people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allotments</td>
<td>-8.64</td>
<td>-18.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenity Green Space</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>-30.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park and Recreation Ground</td>
<td>21.62</td>
<td>-4.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Public combined)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play Space (Children)</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play Space (Youth)</td>
<td>-2.29</td>
<td>-2.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in table 15, the existing shortfalls in allotments and youth play space would be exacerbated, and amenity green space and park and recreation grounds would also be in shortfall. Therefore, the on-site provision of these types of open space as part of new development is a priority. The only typology in sufficient supply following the proposed housing growth is children’s play space, and therefore no new on-site provision of this typology would be required, unless there is a shortfall in provision and/or access in the ward within which the development falls (Section 7.3, figure 11 provides an overview of access to children’s play space and highlights where there are gaps in access).
Requirements from projected population increase across Newcastle City

Table 16  
City-wide open space requirements from new development (up to 2030)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typology</th>
<th>Required standard for new provision</th>
<th>Requirement for 32,700 people (Hectares)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allotments</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>9.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenity Green Space/Natural Green Space</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>32.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park and Recreation Ground (Public)</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>26.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play Space (Children)</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play Space (Youth)</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>69.97</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.3 Application of access standards

This section provides an overview of access to different types of open space typologies across the whole study area, using the access standards summarised in table 13. 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 3 (see example at figure 7).

The access maps for allotments and play space (both children and youth) have used a walk time analysis which is based on the road and path network, using a walking speed of 3mph. This analysis is more accurate than the basic buffer analysis which is based on distance only, as it takes account of the road network/barriers to access. The walk time analysis works well for play spaces and allotments, as they are generally relatively small spaces, with only one access point. The more basic buffer access analysis approach has been used for the remaining typologies.

Within this section, the access buffers are provided along with relative population density calculated from Output Areas using the 2011 census data. This allows gaps in access to be clearly identified e.g. The darker the red, the higher the relative population density.
Figure 7  Example map from appendix 3: access to allotments
7.3.1 Access to open space across the City

Figure 8 Access to allotments (15 minutes’ walk time)
Figure 9  Access to amenity green space (600 metres)

Figure 10  Access to parks and recreation grounds (720 metres)
Figure 11  Access to children’s play space (600 metres)

Figure 12  Access to youth play space (720 metres)
7.3.2 Application of standards (natural green space)

This section looks at the application of standards for natural green space.

**Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGST)**

The ANGST are:

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

**Figure 13 Access to 20 ha site within 2km**
Figure 14  Access to 100 ha site within 5 km

Figure 15  Local Nature Reserves
Table 17  Summary of access issues for natural green space

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANGST Standard</th>
<th>Key access Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home</td>
<td>Access is generally better in the central and parts of the District. Access is overlapping in a number of wards, and some wards have very limited access/no access.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home</td>
<td>The central and eastern wards meet the access standard. Parts of the western-most wards (including all of Newburn ward) have no access.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home</td>
<td>There are no 500 ha sites within Newcastle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes’ walk) from home</td>
<td>There are 9 Local Nature Reserves within Newcastle, all situated within the western half of the study area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.3.3  Access via the Public Rights of Way (PROW) Network

Figure 16 below shows the PROW network across the Newcastle City study area. The PROW network provides access between open spaces and provides an important element of access to/within the more rural parts of the study area. As can be seen, the network is generally fragmented, with the majority of paths in the more rural areas, and particularly good access/connectivity within Newburn and Lemington wards.

Figure 16  Access to Natural Green Space via the Public Rights of Way Network
7.5 Application of quality standards

7.5.1 Quality of open space – consultation key findings

Respondents were asked how they rated various types of facilities in the study area in terms of quality. The responses of those expressing an opinion on specific categories of facility are illustrated in Figure 17 below.

For all kinds of outdoor facilities/open spaces a majority of households suggested that in general they were of average or better quality. However, for some typologies there were notable levels of dissatisfaction with general levels of quality.

- 59% of households highlighted the overall quality of outdoor facilities for teenagers as being either poor or very poor.
- 51% rated the quality of Multi-Use Games Areas as poor or very poor; and 44% similarly for tennis/netball courts.
By contrast, some kinds of facilities/open spaces were rated relatively highly by significant numbers in terms of quality.

- Parks and gardens (56% rate quality in general as being good or very good);
- Country parks/countryside/woodlands (42% rate general quality as being good or very good).

7.5.2 Quality of open space – audit methodology

The audits were undertaken using a standardised methodology and consistent approach. However, audits of this nature can only ever be a snap-shot in time and their main purpose is to provide a consistent and objective assessment of a sites’ existing and potential quality rather than a full asset audit.

It was not possible to survey all sites due to access restrictions, namely private sports grounds/open space and education sites. Other sites were also excluded due to limitations of resources, these included small amenity green spaces (<0.15 ha in size) and roadside amenity spaces (which have little or no recreational value), and churchyards and cemeteries.

Sites were visited and a photographic record made of key features, along with a description of the site and recommendations for improvements. An assessment of the quality of the open space was undertaken using the following criteria:

- Access;
- Welcoming;
- Management and maintenance of hard landscaping;
- Management and maintenance of soft landscaping;
- Litter;
- Dog fouling;
- Healthy, safe and secure;
- Community involvement;
- Biodiversity.

Children’s play space and youth play space was also audited separately using the following criteria:

- Play Value;
- Management and maintenance;
- Accessibility;
- Safety;
- Quality of equipment.

For each of the criteria a score of 1 -5 is given, where 1 is very poor and 5 is very good. These scores are added together to provide an overall existing score for the site. Using these
scores, each site is than ranked for its existing quality and it’s potential to improve, as follows:

**Existing score/rank**

A rank from A – D has been given for the average existing total score as follows:

- The existing quality score of the site is totalled;
- This is divided by the number of criteria for which a score was given to give an average total score;
- The scores are ranked from A – D, where sites with rank ‘A’ are within the top 25% of quality, and sites with rank ‘D’ are in the bottom 25% of quality – i.e. **sites with rank ‘A’ have the best existing quality, and sites with rank ‘D’ have the poorest quality.**

**Potential score/rank**

A rank from A – D has been given for the average gap/potential score as follows:

- The potential quality score of the site is totalled;
- This is divided by the number of criteria for which a score was given to give an average potential score;
- The scores are ranked from A – D, where sites with rank ‘A’ are within the top 25% of potential improvement and sites with rank ‘D’ are in the bottom 25% of potential improvement – i.e. **sites with rank ‘A’ have the most potential to be improved, and sites with rank ‘D’ have the poorest potential to improve.**

### 7.5.3 Quality of open space – audit findings

The quality audit was undertaken at 462 open spaces and 125 children and youth play spaces across the City. The details on the sites audited are provided in a quality audit database which has been provided as an electronic document as part of this study. For each of the wards within the city, a map showing priority sites for improvement has been produced (see appendix 5). Each map is based on the quality audit database (appendix 4), and shows those sites which had ‘potential for improvement’ i.e. those sites which were ranked A, B or C for potential.

Figures 18 and 19 below provide an overview of the existing quality scores and potential rank scores for the open spaces that were quality audited. The maps are intended to be used for indicative purposes – detailed maps by ward are included in appendix 5, and a GIS database of sites have been provided as an electronic database to the council.
Figure 18  Overview of existing open space quality rank scores (sites with rank ‘A’ have the best existing quality, and sites with rank ‘D’ have the poorest quality).
Figure 19  Overview of open space potential quality rank scores (sites with rank ‘A’ have the most potential to be improved, and sites with rank ‘D’ have the poorest potential to improve).
8.0 STRATEGIC OPTIONS, POLICY & MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

This section sets out strategic options and policy recommendations for open space within Newcastle. 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 four 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.

8.1.2 Delivering Strategic Options

Since the adoption of the National Planning Policy Framework in 2012, the planning environment is still in a state of change and flux.

The abolition of regional spatial strategies, and the move towards localism, puts more focus on local authorities to work with local communities to make decisions and deliver services, rather than relying on national or regional guidance. This will clearly impact how some of the recommendations in this study will be delivered.

Whilst the Local Authority will have an important role in delivering open space, sport and recreation facilities, 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.

One of the emerging priorities from localism is for there to be much more local decision making with regards to planning, and for local communities to develop neighbourhood plans. Although it is up to local communities to define their own priorities within 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 the Localism Act and consider how they can fit into local decision making. With this agenda still relatively new, 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. It is recommended that strategies are developed for play provision and green infrastructure delivery. These strategies would focus on distinct geographical areas, and use the information within this study on quantity, access and quality (along with other measurable criteria if required) to prioritise sites for protection and improvement, to identify where new provision is required/future requirements, and to recommend sites which may have potential for alternative use or decommissioning.

The recommended policies within this study will also form the basis of any open space policies adopted by the Council.

8.2 Existing provision to be protected

The starting point of any policy adopted by the Council should be that all open space should be afforded protection unless it can be proved it is not required.

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 value assessment; or
- Of particular nature conservation, historical or cultural value.

The quantity analysis, summarised in table 14 (section 7.2.1) shows that in every ward (with the exception of Byker and Castle), there is a deficiency in at least one typology of open space. Therefore, the following recommendations are made:

**Open Space Policy Direction (protecting open space):**

| OS1 | The distribution of open space varies across the study area, however, there are identified shortages of at least 1 typology of open space in all Wards, with the exception of Byker and Castle Wards. It is therefore recommended that priority is placed on protecting those open spaces where there is an existing shortfall of supply. |
| OS2 | Sites which are critical to avoiding deficiencies, or making existing deficiencies worse, in quality, quantity or access 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 should be afforded protection, even if there is an identified surplus in quality, quantity or access in that local area. |

The importance of privately managed spaces (e.g. sports grounds) as a community facility has been highlighted in this study, although these spaces are not afforded protection through policy recommended as part of this study, as they are not covered by standards. The Plan for
Playing Pitches refers to protection under the NPPF and saved UDP policies (which the development and Allocations Plan will replace once adopted).

8.3 Existing provision to be enhanced

In areas where there is a quantitative deficiency of provision but no accessibility issues then increasing the capacity of existing provision may be considered. Alternatively, in areas where facilities or spaces do not meet the relevant quality standards, qualitative enhancements will be required.

This includes those spaces or facilities which:

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

Those sites which require enhancement are identified within the quality audit that was undertaken. Some of the key observations related to site 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 young people.
3. The role of private sports spaces to some local communities and the need to provide opportunity for investment.
4. The need to ensure high quality open spaces are designed and provided through new development where feasible.
5. The importance of rights of way and natural green space within the Study area, and the need to maintain and enhance provision for biodiversity.
6. The role of open space in contributing to wider initiatives and strategies.
7. Extending and enhancing the network of green infrastructure including the connectivity between sites and improved accessibility to existing sites.

Appendix 5 provides maps by ward showing the sites which have been identified as having ‘potential for improvement’ (i.e. with a potential rank score of A, B or C – see section 7.5.2), as identified within the quality audit (appendix 4). An overview of the open space quality audit rank scores is provided in section 7.5.3. The following recommendations are made in relation the quality of open space:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Space Policy Direction (enhancing open space):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OS5</strong> Where new housing development is proposed, consideration should be given to improving existing open spaces within the ward the development is located. Priority should be given to those sites identified as having ‘potential to improve’ (i.e. with a potential rank score of A, B or C) as detailed in the quality audit (appendix 4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OS6</strong> The Development and Allocations Plan and Neighbourhood Plans (and any potential future open space strategies) should consider the opportunities for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
creating and enhancing a network of both utility and recreation routes for use by foot and bike. Creative application of the amenity green space/natural green space components of the proposed overall standard in respect of new development should be explored.

The findings of the assessment make recommendations for improving the quality of open space across the study area. However, a long term strategy for achieving improvements is required which could be delivered through a Green Space/GI Strategy, Play Strategy, neighbourhood plans or additional design guidance to support the Development and Allocations Plan.

Priorities for improvement include the enhancement of parks and gardens, rights of way, country parks and accessible countryside/nature reserves/wildlife areas, children’s play areas and informal open spaces.

Management plans should be developed for the main parks and recreation grounds. These priorities could 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, 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 next 20 years). 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 green space is no longer needed and its disposal or re use can be used to fund improvements to other spaces.

Each plan should apply the standards and policies set out in this study and ensure that the significant investment anticipated for green spaces is prioritised with the help of stakeholders and communities. The standards agreed in this study can 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.

In determining opportunities for re-location or re-designation of open space, the quantity and access provision have been considered at a ward level, and some general observations made for each ward in Table 18 below. These are purely examples/recommendations for consideration by the Council.

**Table 18  Opportunities for ‘re-designating open space’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Current Provision</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arthurs Hill</td>
<td>Shortfall of allotments, amenity green space and children’s play space. Sufficient supply of all other typologies.</td>
<td>Although there is a shortfall in supply of amenity green space, there is good access to this typology, and also good supply and access to parks and recreation grounds. There is also good access to natural green space. Existing children’s play spaces could be expanded to reduce the shortfall in supply and parks and recreation grounds may have potential to accommodate allotments to reduce the shortfall in supply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benwell and Scotswood</td>
<td>Shortfall of amenity green space and play space (youth). Sufficient supply across all other typologies.</td>
<td>Denton Dene South (park and recreation ground) may have potential to accommodate children and/or youth play space to reduce the shortfalls in provision and access to these typologies. Although there are shortfalls in supply of amenity green space, there is good access to this typology, along with parks and recreation grounds and natural green space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blakelaw</td>
<td>Shortfalls in allotments and youth play space, sufficient supply across all other typologies.</td>
<td>Although there are shortfalls in the supply of allotments and youth play space, there is good access to these typologies. Existing youth provision at Blakelaw Park could be expanded to reduce the shortfall, or amenity green space may have potential to accommodate new provision of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>Current Provision</td>
<td>Opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byker</td>
<td>Sufficient supply across all typologies.</td>
<td>Potential for large amenity green spaces to be upgraded to park and recreation grounds also accommodating youth provision, to reduce the shortfalls in supply and access to these typologies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Callerton and Throckley</td>
<td>Sufficient supply of allotments, amenity green space and children’s play space. Shortfall of parks and recreation grounds and youth play space.</td>
<td>Potential to reduce gaps in access to certain typologies e.g. by introducing allotments in the south of the ward or youth provision at Westfield Avenue Recreation Ground and in the south of the ward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle</td>
<td>Sufficient supply across all typologies.</td>
<td>There is no provision of allotments within the ward, and potential for amenity green space to accommodate provision to reduce shortfalls. Although there is a shortfall in supply (and access to) parks and recreation grounds, there is good provision and access to amenity green space, which could be upgraded to a park and recreation ground, also accommodating youth provision e.g. at Barbondale Common.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapel</td>
<td>Shortfall of allotments, parks and recreation grounds and youth play space.</td>
<td>Scope of Paddy Freeman’s Park to accommodate more youth provision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dene and South Gosforth</td>
<td>Shortfall of youth play space. Sufficient supply across all other typologies.</td>
<td>There are a number of large amenity green spaces which could be upgraded to a park and recreation ground and/or accommodate play space (children’s and youth) and allotments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denton and Westerhope</td>
<td>Shortfall across all typologies with the exception of amenity green space.</td>
<td>Although there are shortfalls in supply of parks and recreation grounds and allotments, there is good access against the standards across the ward. There is also good access to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>Current Provision</td>
<td>Opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fawdon and West Gosforth</td>
<td>Shortfalls across all typologies with the exception of amenity green space.</td>
<td>The main gaps in access are for allotments and youth play space, and there is potential for amenity green space to accommodate these typologies to reduce these gaps e.g. at Dykefield Avenue AGS or Fawdon Park AGS. Although there is a shortfall in parks and recreation grounds, there is good access, due to the park within adjoining Parklands Ward. There is also good access to amenity green space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gosforth</td>
<td></td>
<td>There are gaps in access to all typologies except amenity green space. There may be potential for natural green space (Dukes Moor) to accommodate low impact uses such as community food growing or natural play. Other opportunities could include community use of education facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heaton</td>
<td>Shortfalls of amenity green space and youth play space. Sufficient supply across all other typologies.</td>
<td>Although there are shortfalls in amenity green space, there is sufficient supply and good access to parks and recreation grounds. Existing youth provision within Armstrong park could be expanded to reduce the shortfall in supply, or new provision at Iris Brickfields Park would help reduce the shortfall in supply and the gap in access.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenton</td>
<td>Shortfalls of allotments, parks and recreation grounds and youth play space. Sufficient supply of amenity green space and children’s play space.</td>
<td>Potential for large amenity green spaces (e.g. Hartburn Walk or Kenton Dene) to accommodate youth provision and allotments (and children's play space to reduce gaps in access). These spaces could be upgraded to a park and recreation ground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>Current Provision</td>
<td>Opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston Park South and Newbiggin Hall</td>
<td>Shortfall of allotments. Sufficient supply across all other typologies.</td>
<td>Potential for amenity green space to accommodate allotments to reduce the shortfall in supply and large gaps in access to this typology. Although there is sufficient supply of children’s and youth play space, amenity green space may have potential to accommodate new provision to reduce gaps in access to these typologies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lemington</td>
<td>Shortfall across all typologies with the exception of allotments and amenity green space.</td>
<td>There is good provision and access to natural green space within the ward. There may be potential for these spaces to accommodate natural play. There may also be potential for amenity green space to accommodate youth provision to reduce shortfalls in supply and access.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manor Park</td>
<td>Shortfalls across all typologies with the exception of children’s play space.</td>
<td>Although there are shortfalls of parks and amenity green space, there is good access to these typologies combined, and there is also good provision of natural green space. The main gaps in access are to youth play space and allotments. Natural green space may have potential to accommodate low impact uses such as food growing areas, and amenity green space may have potential to accommodate youth provision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monument</td>
<td>Sufficient supply of amenity green space, parks and recreation grounds and youth play space. Shortfalls in allotments and children’s play space.</td>
<td>Although there is a shortfall in children’s play space, there is good access against the standard to this typology (although existing children’s play spaces could be expanded to reduce the shortfall in supply). Amenity green space may have potential to accommodate allotments to reduce the shortfall in supply of this typology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>Current Provision</td>
<td>Opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Jesmond</td>
<td>Sufficient supply of allotments. Shortfall across all other typologies.</td>
<td>Little opportunity. Amenity green spaces or Allotments may have potential to accommodate children’s and/or youth play space. Although there are shortfalls in amenity green space and parks and recreation grounds, there is also access to natural green space within the ward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ouseburn</td>
<td>Shortfall of allotments, amenity green space and parks and recreation grounds. Sufficient supply across all other typologies.</td>
<td>Little opportunity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parklands</td>
<td>Shortfall of amenity green space and youth play space. Sufficient supply across all other typologies.</td>
<td>Although there is a shortfall in supply of amenity green space, there is good access to this typology and also good access to natural green space. Potential for amenity green space or park and recreation ground to accommodate youth provision. Potential for natural green space to accommodate low impact use such as food growing areas to reduce gaps in access to allotments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Jesmond</td>
<td>Shortfall across all typologies.</td>
<td>Existing play space could be expanded. Natural green space may have potential to accommodate natural play space and/or food growing/allotments. There is good provision and access to natural green space within the ward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walker</td>
<td>Sufficient supply of parks and recreation grounds and youth play space. Shortfalls across all other typologies.</td>
<td>Existing children’s play space could be expanded, alternatively, some of the larger amenity green space could have potential to accommodate children’s play space. Natural green space may have potential to accommodate food growing areas, although there is good access to allotments. Good provision and access to natural green space within the ward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>Current Provision</td>
<td>Opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walkergate</td>
<td>Sufficient supply of parks and recreation grounds and children’s play space. Shortfalls across all other typologies.</td>
<td>Little opportunity. Potential to expand youth provision at Swans Recreation Ground. Natural green space could potentially accommodate appropriate food growing areas e.g. a community orchard. Although there are shortfalls in amenity green space, there is good provision and access to natural green space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Fenham</td>
<td>Shortfalls of allotments and youth play space. Sufficient supply across all other typologies.</td>
<td>Potential for amenity green space or parks and recreation grounds to accommodate allotments and youth play space to reduce the shortfalls in these typologies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wingrove</td>
<td>Shortfalls of amenity green space and youth play space. Sufficient supply of allotments, parks and recreation grounds and children’s play space.</td>
<td>Although there are shortfalls in amenity green space, there is good provision of and access to natural green space. Natural green space may also have potential to accommodate low impact uses such as natural play.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Newcastle Open Space Assessment

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 exists. Section 7 outlines the existing situation with regards to supply and access to open space. As discussed, 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. If an area 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 wards 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 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 a number of opportunities for delivering new facilities through new development – developer contributions and to a lesser extent through capital and grant funding.

**New development, CIL and developer contributions**

The council has adopted its Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to secure developer contributions to pay for key strategic infrastructure. The Council has a list of Infrastructure Projects which is regularly reviewed.
New development will also be required to provide on-site open space in line with 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 (see table 21), when considering future housing numbers for Newcastle, there will be many that will. This study should be used to make local decisions about where and when new on-site provision will be required.

*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 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.

*Requirements for open space from new housing*

Section 7.2.1 outlines the variation in supply of different typologies of open space across wards. As identified, every ward has a shortfall in at least one typology of open space, therefore, the starting point for new housing is to assume that some form of on-site open space provision would be required.

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

| OS10 | New provision of open space will be required as part of new development where housing is allocated in the local plan where there are existing deficiencies in quantity or access to open space and/or where the new development will result in deficiencies. Where on-site provision is required, it 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, including through pooling (to no more than five obligations in accordance with the CIL Regulations) of S106 contributions. 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. Priority sites requiring improvements will be identified using the ranking scores from the quality audit and also from site management plans and the Council’s own knowledge of their sites. |
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 getting the correct balance of open space across the study area before any disposal can be contemplated, and only in exceptional circumstances would alternative use be considered. 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 20 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.
Figure 20: Outline decision making process in relation to sanctioning (re)development of open space

- Fail, unless compensatory provision made
- Fail, unless access improvements made
- Fail, unless quality improvements made

Is there sufficient quantity elsewhere?

Yes

Need to take into account application of minimum quantity standards and other relevant local information

Is there adequate access to alternative provision?

No

Need to take into account application of minimum access standards and other relevant local information

Yes

Is there sufficient quality of alternative provision?

No

Need to take into account application of minimum quality standards and other relevant local information

Yes

Consider other environmental and visual issues
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 the defined 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 sanctioned.

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 existing quality scores of C or D (moderate/poor), and ‘potential’ scores of A, B or C have the highest potential for improvement. If existing open spaces in the vicinity of new development are of poor/moderate quality, then funding for their improvement (e.g. access improvements, signage, improvements to facilities and/or habitats – as recommended in the quality audit database (appendix 4)) 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 developer contributions for on and off site provision.

8.7.1 Developer contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy

This section sets out higher level strategic recommendations and recommends an approach to developer contributions which can be used to inform policy for on-site contributions and to inform the feasibility for any off site investment proposed (through local planning obligations pooling⁹).

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

In order to calculate developer contributions for facilities, a methodology has been adopted which calculates how much it would cost the Local Authority to provide them. These costs have been calculated using local information, and have also been benchmarked against other Local Authorities costs for providing facilities. A summary of the costs are outlined in table 19 below.

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, which more often than not includes new provision. Contribution per person is therefore taken to be a reasonable measure of that impact, irrespective of whether new provision or improvement of existing facilities is required. The calculated costs have drawn on the standards of provision summarised in table 13. These are estimated costs that will be reviewed by the council as part of the Planning Obligations SPD.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typology</th>
<th>Standard (m²) per person</th>
<th>Cost of provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cost / m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotments</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>£30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks and Recreation grounds</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>£72.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play Space (Children)</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>£170.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play Space (Youth)</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>£170.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenity/Natural green space</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>£15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁹ The CIL Regulations in general restrict the pooling of Section 106 contributions to no more than five obligations towards the provision of new infrastructure.
This shows that it costs £935 per person to provide new open space to meet the Newcastle standard for open space. These calculations are to be used to calculate developer contributions for on-site provision and where feasible any off-site projects.

2) Eligible types of development for on-site provision

Table 20 outlines the type of housing that will be considered eligible for making contributions towards open space to meet the needs of future occupants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Open Market Housing / Flats</th>
<th>Housing for the active elderly</th>
<th>Permanent mobile homes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Play Space</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Sports Space</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks and Gardens</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenity Open Space</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Green Space</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotments</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4) Thresholds for provision

The required open space, sport and recreation facilities can be provided by on-site or off-site provision, or through CIL (if included in approved CIL Infrastructure List). 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 to the Council so that it 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 considerations:

- 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 neighbourhood and/or the sub area;
- Other sites in the neighbourhood where additional provision is proposed;
- Existing access to facilities within the neighbourhood and/or sub area.

Table 21 provides a guide to assess which scales of housing generate a need for facilities in the categories listed to be provided on-site. The minimum size of amenity/natural green space considered acceptable as part of new development is 0.15ha. Therefore, developments that require on-site provision, but which would result in less than 0.15ha of amenity/natural green space against the standard (i.e. developments between 20-65 dwellings), the minimum size of amenity/natural green space is 0.15Ha.
Table 21 Requirement for open space, sport and recreation facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Provision</th>
<th>10-19 dwellings</th>
<th>20-49 dwellings</th>
<th>50-99 dwellings</th>
<th>100+ dwellings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allotments</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenity/Natural Green Space</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks and Recreation Grounds</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play Space (children)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play Space (Youth)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KEY: ✓ on-site provision normally sought
      X off-site provision normally required

9.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER WORK

This study provides a solid snapshot of the status of open space within Newcastle City in 2016. It includes a suite of policies and methodology for interpreting and informing the needs for these assets over the coming years, up to 2030. It should be read in conjunction the local needs assessment detailed report (appendix 1).

Newcastle City Council will undertake to carry out a review of the assessment every 3 years, to ensure that the study (and therefore the basis for decision making) remains up-to-date. This will involve maintaining a log of any changes required to the open space mapping, which forms the basis of the study.

It is also recommended that two key areas of further work are undertaken – a Green Infrastructure/Open Space Delivery Plan and a Play Strategy.