

# **Rotherham Green Spaces Strategy**

**Adopted September 2010**

**Environment and Development Services  
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council**

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## **1. About this Strategy**

### **1.1 Why do we need a Strategy?**

Rotherham has a wealth of Green Spaces that have been provided for the enjoyment of local people. Such places need to be well looked after to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the communities they serve. From time to time they may also need realignment or improvement to suit changing circumstances. Rotherham Borough Council and other Green Space providers have worked hard over recent years to manage and improve Green Spaces. This Strategy is intended to take stock of current Green Spaces provision across the borough, to agree new Green Space standards, and to recommend how these can be achieved.

### **1.2 Challenges for Green Spaces**

The provision of parks and open spaces today faces many challenges, for example the need to renew ageing facilities and maintain high standards within limited resources. This Strategy aims to respond to these challenges by reviewing the current and potential value of Green Spaces to the people and environment of Rotherham. This can help us to understand the need to protect and improve Green Spaces and to develop policies to do this. Some of the principal challenges are listed below.

#### **1.2.1 Competition for resources**

Most public Green Spaces are provided by local authorities. They contribute to people's quality of life and well being, but are not a statutory service. Increasingly, local authorities have to prioritise improvements in statutory services such as education and social services. It is not always possible therefore to maintain previous levels of funding for services like Green Spaces.

#### **1.2.2 Higher expectations**

Many of our Green Spaces are more than fifty years old and were designed to meet the needs of their day; this also reflected the way in which Green Spaces were traditionally managed. However, there have been widespread changes in Rotherham over the last thirty years, brought about by decline in traditional industries, migration, technology and cultural changes. The result has been new lifestyles and pressures on the community and environment.

Like other local authorities, Rotherham has responded to these changing circumstances by stating clear priorities for action. These include improving people's health, learning, and enjoyment of life, the involvement of communities in decisions that affect them, economic prosperity, and making the places in which people live cleaner, greener and safer. Particular emphasis is placed on improving the quality of life for the most disadvantaged people in the borough, and on ensuring improvements are sustainable.

There is also an increasing focus nationally on specific roles that Green Spaces can play in improving people's lives. For example, the government is promoting the importance of children's play, stating that access to challenging, fun environments that include an element of risk is a vital part of a child's development. Similarly, there is a greater appreciation of the positive impacts people gain from interaction with nature, especially in relation to mental health and stress alleviation.

All services provided by the Local Authority, including Green Spaces, must now demonstrate the contribution that they make to these new priorities, and must also achieve year on year improvements in these areas. Set against a backdrop of finite resources, we must find ways of using our allocated funding efficiently and effectively, focusing on the things that matter most.

### **1.2.3 Worn out facilities**

After many years of limited investment in Green Spaces, the Council has been pursuing a vigorous programme of improvement at larger sites. However, landscapes and facilities within many other Green Spaces remain in need of upgrade and investment. Matters are made worse by vandalism. A further issue is the increasing frequency of compensation claims that can result in precautionary removal of equipment showing signs of wear or other damage.

Work needs to continue to secure resources to modernise Green Spaces to maximise their value to local people. It is vital that any such investment in infrastructure is matched by effective long-term maintenance to ensure the decline of previous years is avoided.

### **1.2.4 Competition for people's leisure time**

In Britain average working hours are longer than in most other European countries, leaving less leisure time and people now have more choices when deciding how to use their leisure time.

Increasing car ownership means people are more mobile and flexible when choosing leisure options and may opt not to visit local facilities in favour of other attractions further afield. Technology such as computer games, internet use and television also account for more of people's leisure time. These factors, combined with public and media perceptions that Green Spaces are dated and potentially unsafe, can lead to declining use of Green Spaces.

### **1.2.5 Pressure for development**

Nationally there is significant demand on land for new housing developments and other uses. While the emphasis remains on developing brownfield sites, increasingly planners are expected to consider all land for future development, including green and open spaces for infill and expansion. However, it is also acknowledged that increasing housing provision will result in extra demand for play, sport and access to nature.

A balance needs to be struck; new development has major positive impacts in regeneration and economic activity within an area but this needs to be balanced with people's need for open space and recreation.

### **1.3 Other needs and opportunities**

#### **1.3.1 National planning guidance**

Nationally, there is an expectation that councils will take stock of the need for Green Spaces locally, and how well current Green Spaces meet this need. The government has issued planning guidance (PPG17) that sets out how this should be done. The aim should be to produce Green Space strategies that will provide Green Spaces fit for the modern era.

PPG 17 also states how open space and recreation should be considered within the new Local Development Framework (LDF) which will in turn direct planning decisions across the borough until 2026. The Green Space Strategy will contribute to the LDF by providing a robust evidence base now and a set of standards and priorities to guide planning policy relating to Green Space provision.

#### **1.3.2 Asset management**

The Council's Asset Management Strategy aims to optimise the use of all assets to achieve service benefits and financial return. It is essential that all property assets are managed efficiently to support the Council's corporate priorities and vision for the future of the borough. The Green Space Strategy will provide a framework from which the future use and sustainability of individual Green Spaces will be determined.

#### **1.3.3 Community involvement**

The Green Space Strategy provides an opportunity to increase the involvement of local communities, focusing on the sites they feel are most valuable or in need of improvement. This will strengthen the work undertaken in the Green Space audit and provide a clearer list of priorities.

Communities will be encouraged to feel a sense of involvement and ownership. This could include assisting with masterplan development, supporting funding applications and playing a part in the management of sites through friends groups, community clear up events etc. Such involvement could also help to build stronger, more sustainable communities.

#### **1.3.4 An agreed way forward**

Rotherham Borough Council has led on the development of this Strategy, reflecting the fact that it is the main provider of accessible Green Space in Rotherham, and has responsibility for local planning policy. However, there are a number of other bodies who own and manage Green Space, for example

Parish Councils, the Colliery Industries Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO) and private owners.

This Strategy provides a basis for agreeing standards, priorities, and opportunities for partnership working. It is hoped that the mutual benefits of adopting such an approach will encourage other providers to sign up to the Strategy, particularly those receiving revenue support from the Council for maintenance.

## **1.4 The value of Green Spaces**

The contributions Green Spaces make to people's quality of life are varied and extensive. They also perform vital functions as areas for nature conservation and biodiversity. By acting as 'green lungs' they can assist in improving air quality. Well planned and maintained open spaces can play a major part in improving people's sense of well being in the place they live. As a focal point for community activities, they can provide opportunities for people to socially interact. Through PPG17, the government promotes the vital role that open spaces, sports and recreational facilities have to play in promoting healthy living and preventing illness, and in the social development of children of all ages.

### **1.4.1 Leisure, recreation and public health**

The tradition of public parks in Britain stems from a recognition in the nineteenth century of the benefits that they could bring to people living and working in towns and cities, often in cramped and dirty conditions. They aimed to provide opportunities for leisure and recreation in a clean and attractive setting to improve people's health and well-being. Consequently, they were normally equipped with networks of footpaths and facilities for outdoor games, sports and cultural events. Significant parks would also contain carefully tended landscapes for visitors to enjoy.

Since then, Green Spaces have continued to be provided primarily for their recreational value. The ways that they serve local people has varied over time reflecting changing leisure habits, social conditions and resources. For example, growing recognition of children's needs led to development of play areas through the twentieth century; more recently there has been an increased awareness of the specific needs of teenagers leading to provision of multi-use games areas, meeting shelters and skate/BMX areas. The growth of communities based around mining and other heavy industry generated high levels of outdoor sports facilities in parts of the borough; recent decline in such industries has led to changing patterns of demand, and in some cases a decline in standards of maintenance.

In the late twentieth century, interest in the recreational value of the countryside has grown. This included the development of new country parks and other accessible countryside sites in the 1980's. This had a significant impact in Rotherham, with the opening of country parks at Rother Valley, Thrybergh and Ulley, as well as other countryside and woodland sites. A number of these were developed on sites reclaimed from mining activity, e.g. Rother Valley. Country

parks were conceived as a 'stepping stone' to the wider countryside; they provide a high level of customer service, including rangers, toilets, interpretation and catering, all in a safe, naturalistic setting. By helping to build people's confidence in exploring the countryside, such places can encourage visitors to explore the wider countryside using public rights of way networks.

The particular contribution that Green Spaces can make to people's health is once again becoming an important reason for protecting and promoting such places. A growing body of evidence shows that outdoor exercise and contact with nature can help tackle obesity, coronary heart disease and mental health problems, and speeds up recovery from illness. For example, a recent study commissioned by Natural England found that people living in areas more than a mile from a park had a 27 per cent greater chance of being overweight or obese.

Green Spaces are of value in many other ways. For example a footpath through a Green Space can provide a relaxing alternative to the noise and pollution of road traffic on the way to school, work or the shops, while seats provide places for people of all ages to meet friends, watch passers by and people at play.

In short, Green Spaces can benefit people and communities in many ways and all these need to be taken into consideration when working out the relative value of a space.

#### **1.4.2 Biodiversity**

Biodiversity is a measure of the variety of plant and animal species found in an area. Some Green Spaces have greater biodiversity than others. For example, a countryside site with woodland, grass, ponds and streams will include a wider variety of species than a sports pitch.

The recognition of the value of Green Spaces for biodiversity has grown in recent years. Country parks aim to provide places where wildlife flourishes whilst being easily accessible to visitors, providing opportunities for environmental education and life-long learning. Woodlands, local nature reserves and other countryside sites are generally managed for biodiversity as well recreational value. The potential for urban Green Spaces to be managed in a similar way is gaining recognition, bringing environmental, recreational and educational benefits of nature closer to where people live.

Biodiversity is a cross cutting theme in the national government Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF's) Sustainable Schools Framework, which also recognises the importance of schools linking with the community. Green spaces are an ideal conduit for this and care for the environment is seen as complementing care for oneself and others.

#### **1.4.3 Landscape**

The landscape value of Green Spaces is linked to recreational value, with high quality planting being provided in more important parks for the enjoyment of

visitors. However, landscape value can be much wider; Green Spaces often affect the appearance of adjacent streets and homes, and in some cases they are dominant features that help to create the distinct character of a neighbourhood. Green Spaces can also define the edges of neighbourhoods, separating them from the next community. In such cases loss of a Green Space could lead to the erosion of a community's unique identity.

Some Green Space landscapes contain features of particular heritage value, including archaeological remains, listed buildings and structures, historic designed landscapes, and veteran trees. Such features also have educational value, helping people to understand what has made Rotherham the place it is now.

The landscape quality of Green Spaces can have a significant impact on the economic prosperity of the borough. National studies have shown that the appearance of the physical environment is an important factor affecting the location of businesses. It has also been shown that house prices rise around good quality Green Spaces; Examples of this can be seen in the marketing of houses adjacent to Rother Valley Country Park and Bradgate Park.

#### **1.4.4 Dealing with Climate Change**

Green Spaces can play a valuable role in reducing the effect that climate change has on people's lives. For example, recent experience has highlighted the growing threat to homes and businesses in Rotherham from flooding. Whilst the increasing frequency of extreme rainfall events appear to be a factor in this, the spread of the built environment and hard surfacing also contributes to increased run off which results in a rapid increase in river levels.

Green Spaces can help to reduce these effects by storing rainwater. Rain falling onto such areas will tend to soak into the ground, from which plants will absorb a proportion of the water. This reduces the sudden peak of flow into drains and rivers unless the soil is already saturated. Green Spaces can also help to slow down the flow of water to rivers from built-up areas; Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (or 'SUDS') involve the use of specially designed green areas to provide temporary storage of rain water flowing from hard surfaces. In some cases, Green Spaces can also act as overflows for rivers running at high levels, helping to prevent flooding of more vulnerable areas downstream. Rother Valley Country Park is designed to work in this way, as is a new Green Space at Centenary Riverside by the River Don which forms part of the Rotherham town centre flood alleviation scheme.

Warmer summers particularly affect urban areas as buildings and road surfaces heat up quickly increasing the local temperature. This can lead to increased energy consumption through the use of air conditioning which adds to the overall heating effect. Green Spaces can help to reduce these effects because they heat up more slowly. Trees are particularly valuable as they offer protection from the potentially damaging effects of sunlight.



## **1.5 Scope of Strategy**

### **1.5.1 Types of Green Space**

Rotherham is a mix of towns and villages interspersed with large areas of open countryside. Around 70% of the borough is rural, but much of this countryside is not accessible to the public. This Strategy is concerned with sites that are publicly accessible including town parks, country parks, sports pitches, recreation grounds, public open space, countryside sites, and woodlands. The Strategy also considers cemeteries.

Allotments are not considered as they are generally not accessible to the public and are being reviewed separately. School playing fields are also excluded where general community access is either discouraged or prevented. However, it is possible that sites of these types deemed surplus to requirements may help to address any identified under-provision of accessible Green Space, or vice versa.

Details of the amount and type of Green Spaces found in Rotherham are discussed in Chapter 5.

### **1.5.2 Issues considered**

The Strategy focuses to a large extent on the recreational value of Green Spaces, and the standards of provision that are needed to meet local demand. However, as highlighted in the previous section, Green Spaces are important for a number of other reasons which should be taken into account when considering future provision. Recent work on a Local Wildlife System will provide valuable supplementary evidence about biodiversity value of Green Spaces.

The Strategy is intended to provide a foundation on which we can build. To do this we need to address the following areas in relation to Green Spaces:

- Planning powers
- Better use of existing resources, including prioritisation
- Inward investment
- Adoption of standards relevant to Green Spaces
- New ways of working, and sharing of good practice
- Partnerships and community involvement

The Strategy does not present detailed proposals for individual sites at this stage; it sets out a provisional classification of Green Spaces with proposed standards and policies. When agreed, these will be used to implement the recommendations of the Strategy, with further consultation ensuring that local factors are considered.

### 1.5.3 Strategy lifespan

The Strategy should not and will not be fixed at any point in time. Green Spaces change, as do the demands placed on them. It is therefore intended that the Strategy will be subject to regular review to ensure that relevant new information is taken into account, and progress towards the strategic objectives is recorded. The initial actions arising from the Strategy are planned to be implemented over a five year period.

#### Key points

- The Strategy considers publicly accessible Green Spaces, and the measures needed to ensure they meet future demand
- Green Spaces, whilst not a statutory service, have a valuable contribution to make to local priorities including health, well-being and environment
- Problems in attracting investment over recent years has led to tired facilities
- There is a need to identify sites for housing and other development, but this must be balanced against people's needs for open space and recreation
- The government expects local authorities to prepare Green Space strategies to ensure that future planning policy reflects local need for open space and recreation
- The Strategy provides a platform for increased local community involvement and partnership working with other providers
- Other measures that can help improve Green Spaces include better use of resources, attracting inward investment, adoption of standards and new ways of working
- The audit provides only a snap-shot in time and recommendations arising from it will need ongoing review.

## 2. Vision and aims

### 2.1 Vision

This Strategy is needed to drive the development and management of Rotherham's Green Spaces to deliver the greatest possible contribution to the objectives of the Community Strategy and Corporate Plan.

Accordingly, the following guiding vision is proposed:

“Rotherham: a place where people's lives are improved by having access to a network of safe, well-used Green Spaces offering a wide range of recreational and learning opportunities in high quality, sustainable environments”.

### 2.2 Aims and principles

Four strategic aims are proposed. These are based on measurable outcomes, allowing targets to be set and progress to be monitored :-

**Aim 1:** To increase the proportion of the population living within easy walking distance of Green Spaces meeting defined quality standards

**Aim 2:** To increase the number of people who regularly visit Green Spaces

**Aim 3:** To increase the proportion of the population who are satisfied with Green Space provision in Rotherham

**Aim 4:** To increase the number of people participating as volunteers within Green Spaces

The pursuit of the four aims will be guided by the following cross-cutting principles:-

**Sustainability:** Ensure that actions lead to improvements that are long-lasting and that maximise environmental benefits

**Fairness:** To allow the benefits of Green Spaces to be enjoyed by people across the borough equally, regardless of age, sex, ability and ethnicity.

**Community involvement:** Allow local people to understand and influence the way that Green Spaces are developed and managed

## 2.3 Objectives

The realisation of the strategic vision and aims will involve a number of specific objectives.

- 1 Provide sufficient accessible Green Space to meet current and future demand efficiently and sustainably
- 2 Make Rotherham a safer, healthier and more attractive place to live and visit by ensuring Green Spaces are safe, clean and well designed, managed and maintained
- 3 Target existing resources and secure new funding to improve priority Green Spaces and to manage and maintain them to high standards
- 4 Bring together different providers of Green Spaces and other partners to work towards agreed standards and priorities for Green Space provision
- 5 Actively involve communities in the development and management of Green Spaces to ensure that local needs are respected and valued
- 6 Raise people's awareness of Green Spaces by making sites and activities within them accessible and attractive to all groups and individuals, thereby increasing use and satisfaction and contributing to health and community cohesion
- 7 Improve the environmental sustainability of Rotherham through biodiversity, landscape protection, reducing surface water runoff and other measures
- 8 Exploit opportunities to link Green Spaces to develop a green network across the borough

### **3. Other strategies and guidance**

#### **3.1 National guidance**

The importance of Green Space is highlighted by a number of relevant policies and guides that have emerged in recent years. Some of the more important of these are described below, and are summarised in Appendix 1.

##### **3.1.1 PPG 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation**

The Government's revised Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (2002) emphasises that open spaces underpin people's quality of life and are important in assisting urban renaissance, promoting social inclusion and contributing to health and well-being. The Companion Guide to PPG17 entitled 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities' shows national policy objectives for open space including a requirement for planning authorities to undertake local assessments of need and audits of provision and to set local standards for Green Space provision. The Companion Guide sets out a potential route to achieve this goal.

PPG17 also suggests that local planning authorities should seek opportunities to improve the quality and value of local facilities through, for example, the use of planning agreements. It also stresses the importance and value of assessment as a means to co-ordinate planning and Green Space management functions.

Since this guidance note was produced there has been an injection of resources for Green Space development including the establishment of a national body, CABI space, to champion public open space. There has also been promotion of the Green Flag award scheme to provide a national standard for Green Spaces.

PPG17 has been a major influence throughout the development of this Strategy. However, it is expected to be replaced by a Planning Policy Statement entitled 'Natural and Healthy Environment', which will need to be considered alongside this Strategy's recommendations when formulating planning policy.

##### **3.1.2 NICE Guidance on Physical Activity and the Environment (Jan 2008)**

This guidance provides a number of evidence based recommendations on how to improve the physical environment to encourage more physical activity. These include the following relating to Green Spaces:

Recommendation 1; plan a comprehensive network of routes for walking and cycling offering convenient, safe and attractive access to work school and public facilities (including play and Green Space)

This recommendation is addressed through the Local Transport Plan (see 3.2.11) and specifically the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (see 3.2.8)

Recommendation 4; ensure public open spaces can be reached on foot, by bicycle and are also accessible by public transport, and that they are maintained

to a high standard. They should be safe, attractive and welcoming to everyone.

This recommendation reflects Green Flag assessment criteria that are further discussed in Chapter 5.

### **3.1.3 Natural England**

Natural England promotes access to natural open space for biodiversity, recreation and well-being now and in the future. They have suggested a target of accessible natural space within five minutes' walk of every home in England.

Increasing people's levels of physical activity is a national priority and Natural England recognises the contribution the natural environment can make. They have gathered evidence to show that regular access to the natural environment for outdoor play is important for children's development, improving concentration and behaviour. For adults too, one in six of whom is diagnosed with anxiety or depression each year, natural space has a restorative effect, improving the ability to cope with stress and improving concentration and work output.

It is also a Government target to reduce the health divide between rich and poor. Natural England argues that new urban Green Space, more Local Nature Reserves and programmes to encourage active use can help redress this divide. They also state that communities can be strengthened by the presence of Green Space encouraging a stronger social network with less crime.

### **3.1.4 Sport England Active Design Guide**

Sport England has promoted the importance of well-designed places to encourage participation in sport and active recreation in their Active Design Guide. The document has three main themes:–

- Improving Accessibility: providing easy, safe and convenient access to a choice of opportunities for participating in sport and physical activity and active travel for the whole community;
- Enhancing Amenity: promoting environmental quality in the design and layout of new sports and recreational facilities, their links and relationship to other buildings and the wider public realm;
- Increasing Awareness: raising the prominence and legibility of sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for physical activity through the design and layout of development.

These themes are in line with the aims and objectives of Rotherham's Green Space Strategy.

### **3.1.5 Flood and Water Management Act 2010**

This act has been introduced in response to the floods of 2007. It includes measures to encourage the greater use of sustainable drainage systems by removing the automatic right to connect to sewers. This is likely to increase the importance of Green Spaces as assets that help us to manage surface drainage.

## **3.2 Local strategies and context**

### **3.2.1 Community Strategy & Corporate Plan**

The Community Strategy is the overarching policy document to which all organisations within the Rotherham Partnership are aligned; the Council's Corporate Plan sets the local authority contribution. Together, these documents set out priorities for 2005 – 2010 with an overall vision for where we want Rotherham to be in 2020. Our priorities are framed around five strategic themes (Learning, Achieving, Alive, Safe and Proud) and are underpinned by two cross cutting themes (Sustainable development and Fairness).

The work of the Council's Leisure and Green Spaces team in Culture and Leisure contributes to a variety of the Community Strategy objectives as follows:

#### Rotherham Learning

Aiming to increase the number of adults and young people taking part in cultural activities that contribute to their learning and skills development, as well as increasing the number of opportunities for out of hours learning within centres of culture and leisure.

#### Rotherham Alive

Aiming to contribute towards reducing mortality rates from coronary heart disease, strokes and cancer, and improve the overall life expectancy of the population. Increase the number of adults participating in sport and physical activity, progress the Physical Activity Strategy encouraging more people to use local facilities and developing programmes for excluded groups in target areas.

#### Rotherham Safe

Aiming to increase satisfaction with parks and open spaces and develop the Green Space Strategy to improve the quality and use of Green Space in Rotherham.

#### Rotherham Proud

Aiming to increase the percentage of people who participate in local voluntary and community sector organisations and support the development of community groups and partnerships which are diverse, inclusive and sustainable. Increase the representativeness of uses in comparison to the local population profile and develop opportunities for young people from different backgrounds to meet, work and play together.

The Rotherham Public Health Strategy also makes reference to the importance of opportunities for active recreation, and the role Green Spaces have in this regard, including providing venues for people to enjoy events and cultural experiences.

### **3.2.2 Local Area Agreements**

Local Area Agreements (LAAs) aim to address locally identified priorities through a partnership between central government, local government and other Local Strategic Partnership members. They seek to bring together and simplify relevant funding streams, and help join up public services more effectively allowing greater flexibility to pursue local solutions to local circumstances. In short, LAAs are about what sort of place you want to live in. The ideas behind them are to:

- recognise that ‘one size does not fit all’ and local services should reflect local requirements;
- give more flexibility to local authorities and other public sector organisations in the way they deliver services for local people;
- make local authorities and partners more accountable to local people;
- reduce red-tape and improve value for money; and,
- enable local people to get more involved in decisions about local services.

The Green Space Strategy should help to bring greater focus to the role of Green Spaces in addressing LAA priorities.

### **3.2.3 The Local Development Framework (LDF)**

Rotherham’s LDF will provide the basis for determining planning applications until 2026. PPG17 requires that LDF preparation and implementation must be founded upon a robust and sound evidence base. Together with the Green Space Audit (Scott Wilson, 2005), the Green Space Strategy will help contribute to this evidence base and ensure effective planning for open space, sport and recreation within the borough, taking into account the existing and future needs of local communities.

A key priority within the LDF is the need to identify land to satisfy the borough’s housing requirement. The future development of these sites has particular significance for Green Spaces, not only because of the effect it could have on existing accessible open space, but also because of the additional demand for Green Spaces that the resulting increased populations could create. The Green Space Strategy has an important role to play in this regard by supporting development of LDF policy for planning and delivery of Green Spaces to locally pre-determined standards to meet new demand,

A landscape character assessment has been undertaken as part of the LDF. However, this was limited to a broad assessment to identify key landscape character areas with more in-depth assessment of a limited number of possible urban extensions.

### **3.2.4 Playing Pitch Strategy**

Rotherham has numerous playing pitches in parks, recreation grounds, schools, colleges and clubs across the borough. Many of these are available for



community use, providing a network of sites to support thriving leagues and other competitions in football, cricket, rugby league, rugby union and hockey. They are a valuable resource for informal recreation and also enhance the landscape within local communities.

The Playing Pitch Strategy recommends the provision of five key sites (Herringthorpe Playing Fields, Bill Hawes Recreation Ground, Greenlands Park, Barkers Park and Swinton Recreation/Comprehensive). It is intended that investment and development is initially focused on these key sites, although development of other sites is also considered in the Strategy.

The Strategy focuses on the role the Council has to play in ensuring that future playing pitch provision meets changing patterns of demand, not only as a service provider but also as a planning authority. The Strategy looks at the current and future requirements for pitches in different sports, and proposes quantity standards for these. It also examines the current quantity and quality of pitches to assess where improvements may be needed. The need to protect Green Spaces with potential to meet future demand for additional pitches is also identified, as is the potential to convert former pitch sites to address shortages of other types of Green Spaces.

### **3.2.5 ‘Active Rotherham’ – a strategy for sport and physical activity**

The Council is committed to using sport and physical activity to contribute to its goals of improving people’s health and well being, raising their quality of life and fulfilling their potential. The focus of ‘Active Rotherham’ a strategy for sport and physical activity 2010-2020 centres on the specific contribution that this can make to increasing levels of physical activity in the borough.

### **3.2.6 Play Strategy and Play Pathfinder**

The Rotherham Play Strategy was developed to address the need to improve play opportunities for the borough’s children and young people. This was adopted by the Council early in 2007. Since then its objectives have been regularly monitored by a core strategy group as the Council works towards delivery. The Strategy runs for a five year period.

The Children’s Play Programme funded by the BIG Lottery has provided £655,000 for a range of provision and activities which stem directly from the Play Strategy. Running from September 2007, it aimed to deliver seven new or improved play areas, three multi use games areas, four youth shelters and contributes towards a major play facility in Clifton Park. It also provided a play engagement programme which sought to involve children and young people (particularly those who are most hard to reach) in play activities.

More significantly however the Play Pathfinder Programme included Rotherham as one of the first 20 areas after a national selection process. This has delivered £2.5 million (£2 million capital and £500,000 revenue) to renew or create 28 district playgrounds and one major adventure play area.

### 3.2.7 Local Biodiversity Action Plan

The Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) identifies habitats and species that are in need of protection. This is dealt with within the planning system via policy ENV2.2 – ‘Interest outside statutorily protected sites’ which states: *“Proposals which would adversely affect, directly or indirectly, any key species, key habitat, or significant geological or archaeological feature, will only be permitted where it has been demonstrated that the overall benefits of the proposed development clearly outweigh the need to safeguard the interest of the site or feature.”* As the LDF process continues, this and other relevant environment policies will be reviewed and updated.

As part of the LDF process a new Local Wildlife System (LWS) has been developed. Following Defra best practice guidelines, the system identifies a comprehensive set of sites of important nature conservation value that will be protected via the planning system. A list of these sites has been produced for Rotherham, and is included as Appendix 2. This information can be used to supplement the Green Space Audit to ensure that biodiversity value is also considered in determining priorities for site protection and improvement. The sites included in the system will be subject to review as further ecological data becomes available.

Additionally a Biodiversity Duty has been introduced by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) Act 2006, stating that:

*“Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity”.*

The duty includes protecting, restoring and enhancing species populations and habitats, and aims to:

- Raise the profile and visibility of biodiversity,
- Clarify existing commitments with regard to biodiversity, and
- Make it a natural and integral part of policy and decision making.

### 3.2.8 Rights of Way Improvement Plan

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan was developed to fit with the timescales of the second Local Transport Plan and reviewed the use and demand for public rights of way by users and non users. Following this, a statement of action was developed comprising ten key headline actions, with emphasis on:

- Ensuring that the current rights of way network is well maintained and available to path users.
- Ensuring that the definitive map and statement (formal record of rights of way) is current and accurately reflects the network available to the public.
- Ensuring that the requirement of the Disability Discrimination Act is implemented wherever reasonably possible.
- Developing a network of multi-user routes.

Rights of way play an important role in linking Green Spaces and provide alternative and often more attractive entrances to Green Spaces than via road access. Green Spaces can increase and add value to the rights of way network, and provide destinations and rest points for users. Given the close relationship between the use of rights of way and Green Spaces it is important to consider the impact on strategic rights of way when considering any refinement of Green Spaces and vice versa.

### **3.2.9 Corporate Environmental Policy**

The Corporate Environmental Policy summarises the environmental objectives of the council. It includes the following objectives relevant to this Strategy:-

BNE1 – Ensure that the Council’s asset portfolio is sustainable by integrating sustainability into all the Council’s capital and asset management strategies, plans, programmes and projects.

BNE2 – Manage and improve the quality and accessibility of parks, open spaces and public rights of way.

BNE 5 – Protect and enhance the natural environment and the diversity of natural habitats and wildlife.

BNE 6 – Maintain, manage and conserve trees and woodlands in the borough.

### **3.2.10 South Yorkshire Forest Plan**

Rotherham is within the South Yorkshire Community Forest Area. A Forest Plan was developed in 2002 to guide this initiative, including the following key aims:

- Ensure that every resident has access to woodland or wooded area within easy reach of their home
- Give particular encouragement to sectors of the community who have poor access to a high quality environment and to those who are under-represented in their use of the countryside for recreation and sport
- Increase usage of existing local outdoor leisure and tourist attractions, improve accessibility and enhance the range of facilities available
- Promote the health benefits offered by the recreation opportunities and conservation activities in the forest
- Seek people’s views and encourage communities to be involved in planning improvements within the forest
- Increase opportunities for local people to participate, restore and manage the sites near where they live
- Form partnerships involving local people businesses, community groups and environmental organisations
- Protect a network of valuable wildlife sites and corridors through the forest.

### 3.2.11 Local Transport Plan

Clear goals have been set for the Borough's 3rd Local Transport Plan which take full account of transport's wider impact on climate change, health, quality of life and the natural environment. We want our transport system to:

- **support** national **economic** competitiveness and **growth**, by delivering reliable and efficient transport networks.
- reduce transport's emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, with the desired outcome of **tackling climate change**.
- **contribute to better safety security and health** and longer life-expectancy by reducing the risk of death, injury or illness arising from transport and by promoting travel modes that are beneficial to health.
- **promote** greater **equality of opportunity** for all citizens, with the desired outcome of achieving a fairer society
- **improve quality of life** for transport users and non-transport users, and to promote a **healthy natural environment**.

Within the scope of the Green Spaces Strategy, transport will be delivered as a means to an end (not an end in itself) to help achieve the goals of the Strategy. The Local Transport Plan will help people safely and conveniently access local community green spaces and those further afield by the most sustainable and healthy travel modes.

#### Key points

- National policy increasingly promotes the role of Green Spaces in addressing agendas such as health, children's development, community cohesion and environmental sustainability
- National organisations place emphasis on the need to ensure people have access to Green Spaces on foot, and that sites are safe, attractive and welcoming
- Green Spaces contribute to Rotherham Community Strategy priorities with scope for further interaction
- The Local Development Framework is required to ensure future provision of open space and recreation meets local needs, and will translate recommended Green Space standards into planning policy
- A number of other local plans and strategies include recommendations that will help to guide and support the implementation of the Green Space Strategy

## **4 Usage and satisfaction**

### **4.1 Sources of information**

A MORI Poll of both users and non-users was carried as part of the early development of this Strategy (2003) and provides information both on the levels and patterns of use of Green Spaces in Rotherham, and the issues that people view as priorities in improving Green Space provision. This has been supplemented by further consultation; for example a Quality of Life Survey in 2006 and a Young People's Lifestyle survey in 2007. Resident surveys were also undertaken to provide data for a former national indicator of people's satisfaction with parks and open spaces. In order to improve our knowledge of our customer base Rotherham has been using GreenStat, a new national user survey tool, since 2007. The results from GreenStat will be used to inform our future development planning for Green Spaces.

### **4.2 Green Space usage**

#### **4.2.1 Number and frequency of visits**

It is difficult to measure accurately the number of visits to Green Spaces because of the large and diverse number of sites involved and the open and free use of most venues. Vehicle counters have been in use at Rother Valley Country Parks for a number of years and these have allowed relatively accurate estimates of visits to be calculated. The figure was 910,376 in the 2007-08 financial year, and shows a gradual increase over previous years, with 850,528 in 2006-07 and 740,455 in 2005-06. This increase is believed to reflect an improvement in standards of maintenance, facilities and increased event activity at the park, although as with all Green Space usage data the weather can have a significant effect.

Vehicle counters have been installed more recently at Thrybergh Country Park and at Clifton Park where pedestrian counters are also being used; comparable visit data is not yet available from these. At Clifton Park, the counters will be used to assess the impact of the current restoration project on visitor numbers.

A further way of estimating numbers of visits across all the borough's Green Spaces is to analyse frequency of visits indicated by the Quality of Life Survey and Young People's Lifestyle Survey, and then apply these to the total population of Rotherham. This methodology has been used elsewhere in Britain and has gained acceptance as a reliable statistical approach.

The Quality of Life Survey shows that the most commonly used cultural facilities are parks and open spaces, with 47% of respondents reporting use at least once a month and only 17% reporting no use. The Young People's Lifestyle Survey of year 7 and 10 pupils showed that visiting playgrounds, parks and country parks are within the top four activities that children do every or most days. On this basis, the number of visits to Green Spaces in Rotherham is estimated to have been 12,851,497 per year.

## 4.2.2 Getting to Green Spaces

The MORI survey found that ease of access, for example ‘close to home/easy to get to’, was the most common factor in frequent usage of Green Space. 50% walked to their most used Green Space, 48% travelled by car. Detailed analysis of the results shows that people who walk will go further to get to some Green Spaces than others, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Average Walk Times of Visitors to Selected Green Spaces (2003 MORI Survey)

<b>Green Space</b>	<b>Average walk time (minutes)</b>
Thrybergh Country Park	25.6
Canklow Woods	16.6
Barkers Park	7.4
Valley Park	7.8
Clifton Park	13.5
Other Town Park	13.5
Large Recreation Ground	19.0
Local Recreation Ground	8.9

84% of GreenStat respondents travel for less than 15 minutes to Green Spaces with 70% walking and 24% coming by car.

The Young People’s Lifestyle Survey showed that children consider town parks to be easy to access but country parks being amongst the most difficult.

## 4.2.3 Duration and purpose of visits

The main reasons given by respondents to the MORI survey for visiting Green Space were walking and dog walking, visiting children’s play areas, and enjoying scenery, peace and quiet. Analysis of GreenStat returns suggests that park visits are most commonly of between 30 and 60 minutes duration.

## 4.3 Satisfaction with Green Spaces

### 4.3.1 Quantity

The MORI survey found that Rotherham residents considered themselves lucky in having so much Green Space. There is little perceived need for extra provision but instead a desire for what already exists to be improved, maintained and protected.

### 4.3.3 Quality

Until recently, there has been a compulsory national indicator of satisfaction for various components of Culture and Leisure provision, including Green Space (Best Value Performance Indicator 119e) derived from residents' surveys. Table 2 shows how Rotherham has performed compared to neighbouring authorities. Green Space satisfaction in 2003/04 was 70% in 2006/07 satisfaction fell to 67%.

No further data will be collected against this indicator as it was withdrawn as a statutory requirement at the end of March 2008. However, generally it is expected that the results from such satisfaction surveys are valid for three years.

For continuity it is proposed that comparable data should still be collected to assess residents' satisfaction with Green Spaces.

**Table 2.** *BVPI 119e – Residents' Satisfaction with Green Spaces, for South Yorkshire Districts*

	2003/04	2006/07
Barnsley	63	58
Doncaster	65	60
<b>Rotherham</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>67</b>
Sheffield	75	80

This table suggests a general decline in residents' satisfaction with parks and open spaces in recent years, with only Sheffield bucking this trend locally. This may reflect a large scale investment in some of Sheffield major parks, including the Winter Gardens, Botanical Gardens, Norfolk Park and Weston Park. Similar investment is now being made in a number of Green Spaces in Rotherham, as discussed in section 6.3.2.

Satisfaction with the quality of provision of public Green Spaces within the MORI Survey was high with 75% of respondents 'satisfied' of which 28% were 'very satisfied'. GreenStat results show 70% of respondents as viewing Rotherham's parks and open spaces as good or very good, compared to a national average of 68% (see Table 3). The results of the Young People's Lifestyle Survey show that year 7 and 10 pupils rate Green Spaces as amongst the best local amenities.

**Table 3.** *GreenStat respondents' satisfaction with different aspects of Green Space (2007-08)*

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Rotherham Score Good/ Very Good (%)</b>	<b>UK Average Score Good/ Very Good (%)</b>	<b>Difference between Rotherham and UK ave.</b>
Care and protection of nature and wildlife	55	55	-8
Design and appearance	63	69	-6
Standard of cleanliness and maintenance	57	62	-5
Standard of maintenance of trees, flowers, shrubs and grass areas	67	71	-4
Visitor facilities	39	41	-2
Ease of getting around	84	85	-1
Sports facilities	39	40	-1
Facilities for children and their parents	50	45	+5
<b>Overall satisfaction with parks and open spaces</b>	70	68	+2

#### 4.3.4 Barriers

The main non-users of Green Space identified by the MORI survey were males under 25 years or over 65 years, disabled persons and those with no access to private transport. The main reasons for not visiting Green Spaces were;

- Access problems (e.g. difficult to get to, lack of public transport, busy roads, poor condition of paths),
- A preference for other activities,
- Disrepair (e.g. dog fouling, vandalism, graffiti)
- Lack of facilities,
- Poor health or mobility problems
- Safety fears.

#### 4.3.5 Improvements

The main priorities identified for action within the MORI survey were;

- Provision of toilets
- Presence of park keeper / warden /ranger
- Safety for children
- Good lighting
- Shelter from the rain



Other improvements mentioned were

- Better access by public transport
- Good facilities for children
- More events

This is echoed by more recent GreenStat survey results suggesting that the following things would make people visit more often and stay for longer:

- Improved maintenance and litter removal
- Toilets
- Better play facilities
- Cafés including covered seating
- Park rangers
- More events.

Progress is being made to improve Rotherham's urban parks; masterplans have been prepared in consultation with local people and Friends groups, and these have supported bids for external funding. More than £8 million is being invested to refurbish Clifton park, around £2.5 million worth of play improvements have taken place over the last two years alongside many smaller projects in other parks. These include new facilities for children and young people, pavilions, footpaths, lighting, fences and garden areas. A small number of sites are now being managed and maintained to Green Flag standard.

It is hoped that this work will help to reverse the decline in people's satisfaction indicated by BVPI 119e. The long-term success of these initiatives will to some extent depend on the level of revenue funding available to maintain improvements to acceptable levels.

#### **4.4 More people, more often**

The Council and other providers invest in Green Spaces to improve the quality of life for the communities they serve. A poorly used Green Space therefore represents a poor return on investment.

The Culture and Leisure service already measure the number of visits to its facilities and events, and sets annual targets for increasing usage. This principle will underpin Green Spaces development and management. Recommendations elsewhere within this Strategy to make Green Spaces safer, more attractive and more accessible, all contribute to increased usage. However, Green Spaces also need to be marketed to ensure that they are fulfilling their potential to enrich the lives of local people. Such measures can also help to increase public satisfaction levels.

Marketing comprises a number of important elements. It requires a good understanding of the population served by a Green Space, and what they want to see and do there. It should also explore the reasons that some people do not use Green Spaces. This evidence can then be used to develop Green Spaces and the activities within them in a way that meets identified needs. Marketing

also requires that potential users are made aware of available Green Spaces and what they have to offer. Such information should be presented in a way that is accessible to the widest possible audience

This Strategy takes into account the views of Rotherham people as identified through consultation outlined previously. However, further detailed and up-to-date information will be needed to guide the implementation of the Strategy. For example, site-specific consultation will form an important stage in the development of Green Spaces. Those who use Green Spaces rarely or not at all are considered to be a target for future development work, to increase usage rates. It is recognised that consultation with some hard-to-reach groups will need to be undertaken in partnership with representative bodies.

Providing information helps people to know what they can expect from Green Spaces. The Council currently produces twice yearly programmes of events in Green Spaces, and leaflets are available giving information about three of the borough's urban parks and Rother Valley Country Park. There is also information about Green Spaces on the Council's web site. Some Friends Groups also provide information about parks, either as leaflets or on their web sites. Over recent years, information signs have been erected at a number of parks as have directional signs on surrounding roads. In spite of this activity, there is still a considerable amount of work to be done to provide a comprehensive marketing package for Green Spaces.

#### **4.5 Volunteering**

Green Spaces are an intrinsic part of the Rotherham infrastructure and are available to all. Local residents and users value Green Spaces and can be very protective about them. This interest in Green Spaces highlights their potential to act as a catalyst for new volunteer activity which has been identified as a priority in Rotherham's Community Strategy.

People volunteer for a variety of reasons; to gain new skills, to put something back into their community, to meet new people and for a sense of pride and ownership; this non-financial contribution plays an important role in Green Space management and improvement leading to highly valued and cared-for places.

There is huge variety in the opportunities for volunteers within Green Spaces; many people with a strong personal interest in matters such as nature conservation, sports and local history already act in a voluntary capacity to assist with projects and service delivery in these areas. Friends Groups help develop master plans for specific sites, organise events and assist with funding bids. There are opportunities for people wishing to get involved in the day to day maintenance and management of sites, for example as Voluntary Rangers at country parks and more recently volunteer walk leaders have been trained to lead walking groups around Green Spaces in Rotherham.

A volunteer development plan has been produced by the Council as part of the Clifton Park restoration project; this could be rolled out as a model for Green Spaces elsewhere in the borough. Bodies such as Voluntary Action Rotherham

and the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers have established roles in this field and could help to make such schemes successful. Alongside this, the Council is continuing its efforts to support community groups wishing to get involved in local Green Spaces; for example, the Culture and Leisure service has developed an information pack on how to set up and sustain a Friends Group.

Information about the range of volunteering opportunities currently available needs to be assembled and promoted. Baseline data about how much activity already occurs will be gathered to allow targets to be set to increase participation.

### **Key points**

- Green Spaces across Rotherham attract a high number of visits, and are the most commonly visited cultural facility for adults and one of the top four activities for young people
- Repeat surveys are needed to confirm usage levels and identify changes over time
- Accessibility is a major factor in deciding whether to use a Green Space, with the majority of users getting to Green Spaces on foot and taking less than 15 minutes
- Consultation has shown that local people are happy with the quantity of Green Space in the borough, but want it to be maintained and improved
- Satisfaction with design, appearance and maintenance of Green Spaces is below the national average, with disrepair and lack of facilities being amongst the main reasons for not visiting Green Spaces
- Safety fears are also amongst the reasons given by people for not visiting Green Spaces, with improved safety for children identified as one of the main priorities for action
- People's other main priorities for improvement include toilets, park wardens, maintenance, litter removal, play facilities, shelter, cafes and events
- More complete and up to date information needs to be provided to people about Green Space sites and activities within them
- Marketing of Green Spaces should primarily target people who use Green Spaces only occasionally or not at all.
- Green Spaces are an ideal environment for volunteer activity, and there are significant opportunities to expand this.

## **5. What Green Spaces do we have?**

### **5.1 Green Space audit**

There are hundreds of accessible Green Spaces across Rotherham ranging from formal parks to woodlands to grassed amenity areas situated in residential sites. The current pattern of Green Spaces has evolved over several hundred years, and has never previously been comprehensively recorded or considered as a whole.

Without an understanding of what we have, where it is and its quality and accessibility, it would be extremely difficult to plan how to provide, maintain and develop Green Spaces in Rotherham.

To complete this task specialist consultants were appointed in 2004/05 to undertake an independent, comprehensive audit across the borough of accessible Green Spaces over 0.2 hectare in size to give baseline data for the Strategy. This methodology was based on guidance within 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities - PPG17 Companion Guide' (2002).

A total of 425 accessible Green Spaces were identified and mapped. By using Geographical Information Systems the sizes of Green Spaces and numbers of people living within defined catchment areas could be calculated quickly and reliably; this information was later used to assess each site's importance.

Enquiries were made to neighbouring local authorities to identify and take into consideration Green Spaces located within 400 metres of the Rotherham boundary. Responses were received from Sheffield, Bolsover, and Bassetlaw.

Full details of the how the audit was carried out and what it found are given in a separate report, 'Green Spaces Audit for Rotherham' (2005). A summary of the main findings is given in the following sections.

### **5.2 Green Space types**

Green Spaces vary widely in character. The main qualities that all sites considered by this Strategy share are that they contain no or few buildings and are managed mainly for their recreational and environmental value. PPG17 proposes definitions for eight types of Green Space that can be used to categorise audited sites. This was simplified for use in the Rotherham audit, resulting in the following five types:-

- Parks and gardens (including urban and country parks)
- Amenity Green Space (informal and incidental Green Space, often providing little more than a green 'carpet' in the space between buildings and/or roads)
- Outdoor sports facilities (where sport is the predominant use, so would not include sports facilities contained within parks)

- Cemeteries and churchyards
- Natural Green Spaces (including semi-natural Green Spaces and woodlands)

Assigning Green Spaces to these categories formed part of the site survey process. Some sites, particularly larger ones, can have a mix of different types of landscape and use within them. For example, a park might include outdoor sports and natural areas. The type simply indicates the dominant character of each site, and cannot be used on its own to reliably assess the overall supply of different types of accessible open space.

Further investigations have been undertaken into specific aspects of Green Spaces. Rotherham's Playing Pitch Strategy (2008) and the audit of children's play areas as part of the Play Strategy (2007) have allowed a more detailed picture to be built up about the supply of these important facilities. An audit of allotment provision is underway, a Local Wildlife System (2008) has been developed to identify sites of special ecological value, and a Landscape Character Assessment has been carried out as part of the Local Development Framework process.

### 5.3 Quantity

#### 5.3.1 The overall amount of Green Space in Rotherham

The audit identified 1893 hectares of accessible Green Space across the borough. This equates to approximately 7.51 hectares per 1000 residents. Comparison with other metropolitan districts where data is available shows that Rotherham has a comparatively high level of Green Space provision.

**Table 4.** Area of Audited Green Space per 1000 People in Rotherham and Selected Other Districts

District	Ha/1000 people
<b>Rotherham</b>	<b>7.51</b>
Salford	5.26
Walsall	4.98
Barnsley	4.90
Sandwell	4.24
Stockport	6.43
St Helens	4.07

Consultation with local people shows that most consider themselves lucky to have so much Green Space.

Due to the overall amount of accessible Green Space available in the borough, resources tend to be thinly spread. This can restrain efforts to provide the quality that local people would like to see. Whilst many Green Spaces play an important role in improving the quality of life for local people, others may be of limited value due to their size and location.

### 5.3.2 Amounts of different types of Green Space

**Table 5.** Overall quantities of audited Green Space by type in Rotherham

Type	Number of Sites	Hectares	Hectares per 1000 population
Amenity	187	176.8	0.70
Cemeteries	39	57.8	0.23
Natural	98	937.4	3.72
Outdoor Sports	46	205.8	0.82
Parks & Gardens	55	515.1	2.04
<b>Total</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>1892.8</b>	<b>7.51</b>

Levels of Green Space provision reflect Rotherham's history with large areas reclaimed from former coal workings and other industrial uses to create large accessible natural spaces such as Rother Valley Country Park, Pithouse West, Grange Park and Wath Manvers Lake. There are also several post-war public housing schemes with extensive areas of amenity Green Space.

The distribution of audited Green Spaces of different types is shown in Figure 1.

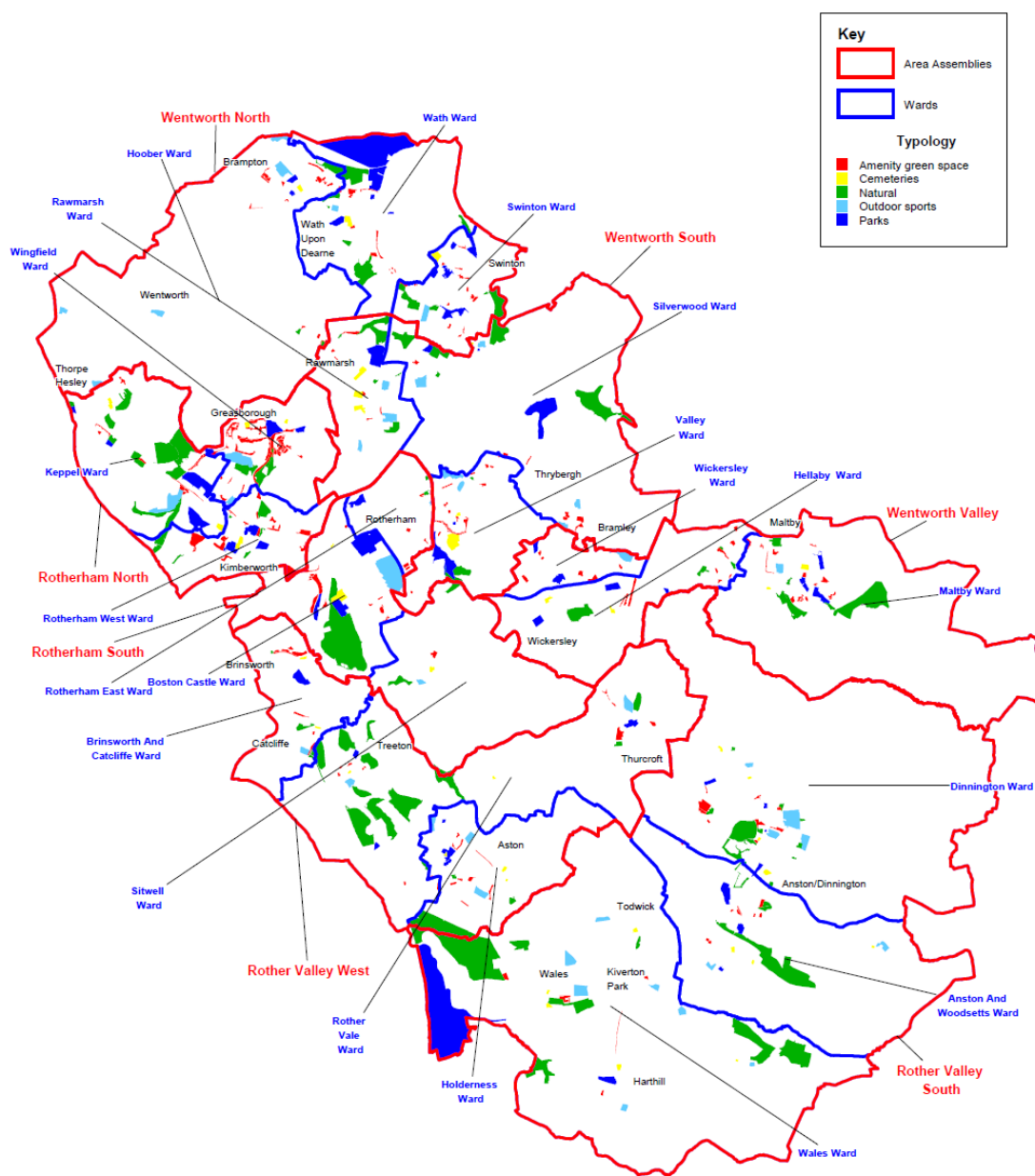
### 5.3.3 Variations across the Borough

**Table 6.** Quantities of audited Green Space by Area Assembly

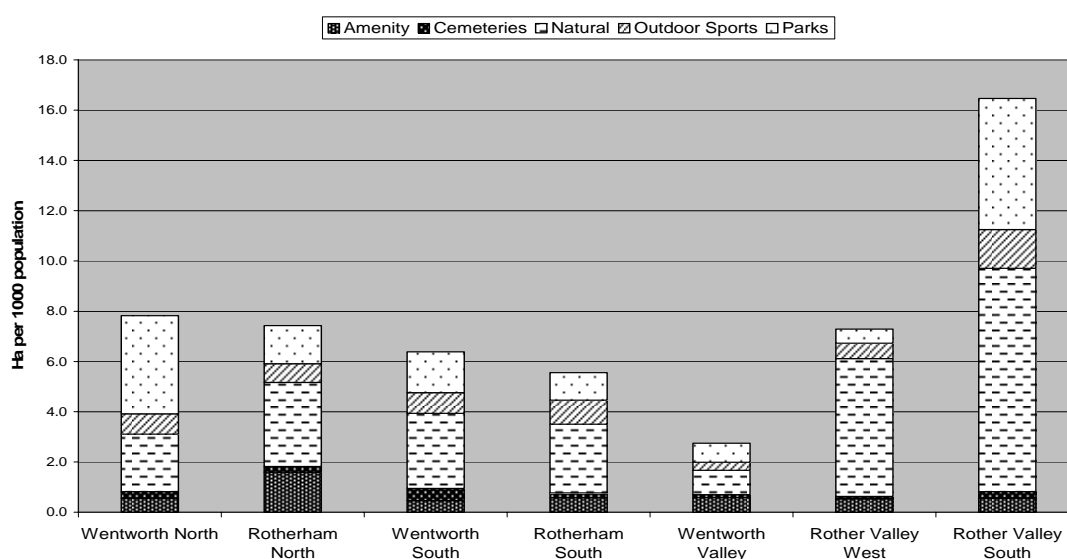
Area Assembly	Number of Sites	Hectares	Hectares per 1000 population
Wentworth North	65	276.8	7.82
Rotherham North	74	279.3	7.43
Wentworth South	66	233.5	6.38
Rotherham South	30	206.8	5.55
Wentworth Valley	47	95.5	2.75
Rother Valley West	65	250.2	7.29
Rother Valley South	78	550.8	16.46
<b>Total</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>1892.8</b>	<b>7.51</b>

Wentworth North and Rother Valley South have very high levels of Green Space provision mainly because of reclaimed landscapes; in other parts of the borough the overall quantities per 1000 population are closer to the national average. However, these figures do not in themselves indicate whether current supply is adequate to meet demand.

**Figure 1** Distribution of Audited Green Spaces by Type



The proportion of different types of Green Space also varies between Area Assemblies, as shown in Figure 2, and as percentages in Table 7.

**Figure 2** Quantities of different types of audited Green Space by Area Assembly**Table 7.** Percentages of each type of audited Green Space by Area Assembly

Area Assembly	Amenity	Cemeteries	Natural	Outdoor Sports	Parks & Gardens
Wentworth North	7	3	29	10	50
Rotherham North	21	3	45	10	20
Wentworth South	7	8	47	13	25
Rotherham South	11	3	49	17	20
Wentworth Valley	21	4	35	11	28
Rother Valley West	7	1	75	8	8
Rother Valley South	4	1	54	9	32

Whilst the overall area of Green Spaces in Rotherham is high, distribution is not even across the borough, although it should be noted that a few very large sites do account for a significant element of the variances.

Green Spaces can benefit local people in many ways, providing settings for quiet relaxation, appreciation of nature, active sport and recreation, and social interaction. The benefits offered by an individual site depend on its type, so ideally people should be able to access a range of different types of Green Space.



In addition to the Green Spaces identified within the audit, there are very many smaller Green Spaces (below 0.2 hectares) which also contribute to the high level of provision within the borough, and which require resources for maintenance. These must be taken into account on a case by case basis when considering possible realignment of Green Space provision, and also when making land use allocations within the Local Development Framework.

## **5.4 Quality**

A wide range of factors were assessed to build up a score for each Green Space, including physical, social and aesthetic qualities as follows:

- Physical - built features, signage, furniture, boundary features, footpaths etc
- Social – sense of security, evidence of vandalism etc
- Aesthetic – sense of place by reference to balance, scale, enclosure, diversity, views etc

The overall quality scores vary widely between 30.7 and 94.8 (out of 100) for individual sites, with an average score of 67.6. Currently the only Green Space quality standards in widespread use relate to the Council's specification for grounds maintenance. The variable quality of sites highlights the lack of any consistent standards for other aspects of Green Space provision.

Certain types of site generally have higher quality scores such as cemeteries and parks. Natural Green Spaces appear to have the lowest overall quality but also have the largest range of scores.

An example of a high quality site is Thrybergh Country Park (type: park). This site is well signed, has good transport links including car parking, surfaced footpaths through the site and interpretation. There is a café and play facilities as well as litter and dog bins. Due to the presence of staff on site there is little evidence of vandalism, and a good feeling of personal security.

An example of a low quality site is Pithouse West (type: natural). This site has surfaced tracks though the site but few other facilities, there are no toilets or refreshment provision and the site is not clearly signed or easily accessible by car or public transport.

### **5.4.1 Green Flag**

The Green Flag award scheme has introduced a quality standard for Green Spaces across Britain. The scheme comprises eight criteria that assess whether a Green Space is:

- Welcoming
- Healthy, safe and secure
- Well maintained and clean
- Managed in a sustainable way
- Making the most of its conservation and heritage potential
- Encouraging community involvement

- Actively marketed, and
- Has strong management plans in place.

The standards are increasingly regarded as a useful benchmark for park quality nationally, regardless of whether Green Spaces are entered into the award scheme.

Green Flag awards have been achieved at Thrybergh Country Park every year since 2006, and for the last three years at Rother Valley Country Park. Ulley Country Park gained the award in 2007, but has not been entered into the scheme since 2008 due to partial closure following the floods in 2007. Rosehill Park in Rawmarsh was the first urban park in Rotherham to receive the Green Flag award in 2009.

## 5.5 Value

The audit included a model for assessing how valuable each Green Space is, or could be, to its users and potential users. This is an important step in prioritising improvement works for Green Spaces. The value score takes into consideration:

- Number of people living within five minutes walking distance of the site.
- Size of the Green Space.
- Extent to which local people rely on that Green Space, measured by looking at whether and by how much its catchment overlaps with those of any other Green Spaces nearby.

Deprivation was also taken into account with Green Spaces serving the most deprived 10% (nationally) localities identified.

These factors help to define the value in the following ways:

- The greater the population living within a catchment, the greater the value of the site
- The greater the area of the site, the greater its potential value.
- The fewer surrounding, overlapping catchments there are, the greater the value
- Green Spaces serving the most disadvantaged communities highlighted.

This resulted in a wide range of value scores, with some types of Green Space tending to be more valuable than others. Outdoor sports sites and natural sites were amongst the more valuable, although they also have the lowest average quality scores. Parks had high average value and quality scores. Amenity Green Spaces and cemeteries were less valuable than other types of Green Space.

An example of a high value site is Clifton Park, which is large at 23 hectares, and surrounded by densely populated areas. By contrast, the amenity Green Space at Ickles roundabout on Centenary Way has an area of just 0.75 hectare and relatively few people living within five minutes walking distance making it a low value site.

## 5.6 Quality/value matrix

The concept of combining quality and value was introduced in the PPG17 Companion Guide. The two measures are combined in a quality / value matrix which provides a simple way of categorising Green Spaces and suggesting how each might be dealt with.

To achieve this, sites are designated as high quality or low quality, depending on whether their quality score is above or below the borough average.

**Table 8.** *Quality/Value matrix*

<p><b>High Quality / Low Value</b></p> <p>If possible enhance the site's value. If this is not possible, a secondary approach is to consider whether it might be of high value if converted to some other Green Space type. Only if this is also impossible would it be acceptable to consider change of use.</p>	<p><b>High Quality / High Value</b></p> <p>Ideally all spaces and facilities should come into this category and the planning system should seek to protect them.</p>
<p><b>Low Quality / Low Value</b></p> <p>If possible enhance the site's quality provided it is possible also to enhance its value. If this is not possible, the space maybe 'surplus to requirements' in terms of its present primary purpose.</p>	<p><b>Low Quality / High Value</b></p> <p>The policy approach to these spaces should always be to enhance their quality and therefore the planning system should seek to protect them.</p>

## 5.7 Value added by linking sites

Improving Green Space provision is not just about individual sites. The value of Green Spaces can be greatly enhanced by linking them together in corridors giving safe, attractive access for pedestrians and, in some cases, cyclists. In this way, the recreational opportunities offered by one site can be expanded to include those at other linked Green Spaces, as well as the enjoyment and health benefits of walking or cycling between them. An extensive network of such routes can also enable people living in urban areas to reach the countryside, offer increased opportunities for horse riding or provide a green alternative for journeys to work or school. By-laws prohibiting cycling and horse-riding in some Green Spaces may need to be reviewed to achieve this.

If properly designed and managed, green corridors can also greatly enhance local biodiversity, allowing wildlife to move safely between Green Spaces, and providing valuable habitats within the corridor itself. They can also help to improve the landscape quality of the borough by softening the visual impact of

the built environment, and creating a sense of place within local communities. This is sometimes known as ‘green infrastructure’, and is increasingly being promoted nationally as an element in creating sustainable communities.

Work has been done to improve the rights of way network across the borough, and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan identifies further scope for this. The opportunity exists to take this further by identifying sites within the Green Space audit that could be linked with each other and with rights of way to accelerate the development of a green network for Rotherham. This could also include accessible land alongside watercourses and other linear features.

## 5.8 Green Space hierarchy

Some Green Spaces offer more facilities and activities than others. These tend to be more extensive sites that are used by larger numbers of people. However, simple Green Spaces can also play an important role in meeting the needs of local communities, as they are often close to where people live.

The Strategy recognises the need to provide different grades of Green Space, and the following hierarchy has been developed to help set appropriate standards within this provision. When deciding the grade for each site, size, location, current character, value and quality scores were all taken into account.

**Table 9.** *Proposed Green Space hierarchy*

<b>Grade and main function</b>	<b>Typical size</b>	<b>Typical characteristics</b>
<b>Local Green Spaces</b> Regular use mainly by pedestrian users, includes preferred routes to school, shops, work etc	0.2 hectare and more	Appropriately maintained site providing safe and clean areas for walking, informal recreation and play, sitting out areas
<b>Neighbourhood Green Spaces</b> Weekend, early morning, after school and evening visits by foot, cycle, car and short bus trips	3 hectares and more	Well maintained landscape with a variety of features and facilities providing for a range of activities, e.g. outdoor sports, children’s play and informal recreation pursuits. Regular staff (ranger) visits and occasional events.
<b>Borough Green Spaces</b> Weekend and other occasional Visits mainly by car or public transport	25 hectares and more.	Large sites with intrinsic special interest, e.g. heritage, landscape, wildlife, children’s activities, sports. Good level of visitor facilities. Appropriate on-site staff levels to manage site and visitor numbers. Several events per annum.

This approach gives a provisional grading for each site based not only on their current character, but also their potential function. For example, some sites graded as Neighbourhood or Borough might not currently have all the characteristics of a typical site of that grade, but could potentially serve that function due to their size and location. Proposed gradings at some sites may be revised where it is concluded that they are not able to reach their full potential.

**Table 10. Provisional Borough and Neighbourhood Green Spaces by Area Assembly**

Area Assembly	Borough Green Spaces	Neighbourhood Green Spaces	Local Green Spaces
1 Wentworth North	None	Swinton Highfield Park, Wath Community Park, <i>Brampton Sport Centre,</i> <i>Newhill Park,</i> <i>Manvers Lake</i>	57 sites
2 Rotherham North	None	Barkers Park, Ferham Park, Bradgate Park, Greasbrough Park, <i>Blackburn &amp; Kimberworth Roundwalk NE</i>	64 sites
3 Wentworth South	Thrybergh Country Park	Herringthorpe Valley Park + Gibbing Greave Wood, Rosehill Victoria Park, <i>Barbers Road Rec.,</i> <i>Claypit Lane Rec.</i>	54 sites
4 Rotherham South	Clifton Park, Herringthorpe Playing Fields, Boston Park + Moorgate Cemetery + Canklow Wood	Eldon Road Rec.	22 sites
5 Wentworth Valley	None	Bill Hawes Rec., Coronation Park, Ruby Cook Rec., <i>Warren Road Park,</i> <i>Barrie Grove Rec.</i>	39 sites
6 Rother Valley West	Pit House West (also in Rother Valley South)	Ulley Country Park, Gordon Bennett Rec., <i>Brinsworth Parish fields,</i> <i>Alexandra Park + annex,</i> <i>Fairview Drive</i>	51 sites
7 Rother Valley South	Rother Valley Country Park + Pit House West	Greenlands Park, <i>Spence Field,</i> <i>Wales Parish playing fields,</i> <i>Woodsetts parish field,</i> <i>Dinnington Miners Welfare,</i> <i>Dinnington Tip POS</i>	58 sites
<p><i>Notes</i>  – Names in italics indicate sites whose proposed grading is subject to review  - Name + Name indicates where adjacent sites have been considered together</p>			

In some cases adjoining Green Spaces have been considered together and classified as either Neighbourhood or Borough sites because their combined size and range of facilities and landscapes warrants such a classification.

Any type of Green Space (as defined in section 5.2) can be graded as Local,

Neighbourhood or Borough, except Cemeteries which are not graded due to their particular function. In practice however, the majority of Local sites are classified as ‘Amenity’ or ‘Natural’, while Neighbourhood and Borough sites are more likely to be ‘Parks and Gardens’ or ‘Outdoor Sports’ as shown in Table 11.

**Table 11.** Numbers of Green Space by type and grade

Type	Grade			
	Local	Neighbourhood	Borough	Not Graded
Amenity	187	0	0	0
Natural	92	3	3	0
Outdoor sports	37	8	1	0
Parks & Gardens	29	22	4	0
Cemeteries	0	0	1	38

Borough and Neighbourhood Green Spaces also act as Local Green Spaces for people who live in their vicinity.

A full list of audited Green Spaces by area assembly and provisional grading is given in Appendix 3.

## 5.9 Site improvement priorities and quality standards

The Audit assessed 109 sites as being of high value but only low quality, including 3 Borough sites and 15 Neighbourhood sites. As suggested by the Quality/Value Matrix (section 5.6), such sites should be a priority for improvement, in particular Neighbourhood and Borough Green Spaces. In fact, a number of Green Spaces within this category have been improved since the audit was carried out. These include Bradgate Park, Greenlands Park in North Anston, Rosehill Park in Rawmarsh, and Cherry Tree Park in Maltby.

Many Green Spaces are still in need of improvement; however, it would be unrealistic and inappropriate to suggest that every Green Space should meet the same quality standard. For example, the facilities and management required for an outdoor sports site will differ from say a natural site. Resource limitations also mean that it is not realistic to aim to achieve the same quality at Local sites as Neighbourhood and Borough sites. A consistent set of minimum quality standards for each grade of Green Space is required to allow the scale of investment necessary to bring existing Green Spaces to an acceptable level. Such standards will also help the move towards providing people in all parts of the borough with access to Green Spaces of comparable quality.

## 5.10 Catchment areas and accessibility standards

An important characteristic of Neighbourhood and Borough Green Spaces is their wider catchment area than typical Local Green Spaces. Consultation has shown that local people will walk on average for less than ten minutes to reach a Local site, but around fifteen minutes to visit a Neighbourhood site. These figures are similar to those identified from research elsewhere in Britain.

The same walk time applies to Borough sites as Neighbourhood sites as both grades of Green Space serve the communities around them in similar ways. However, Borough sites will also be more likely to attract people using cars and public transport from further away because of their special interest.

Walk times of five minutes and fifteen minutes for Local and Neighbourhood Green Spaces respectively have been converted to walk distances assuming an average walk speed of 3mph (4.8kph), as shown in Table 12. These walk distances have then been converted to straight line (or 'Radial') distances to take into account the fact that walking routes have to follow roads and paths which do not normally follow a straight line.

**Table 12.** *Catchment distances for different grades of Green Space*

Grade	Walk time	Walk distance @ 3mph	Radial distance
	minutes	Metres	metres
<b>Borough</b>	15	1200	840
<b>Neighbourhood</b>	15	1200	840
<b>Local</b>	5	400	280

The proposed accessibility standards are based solely on the walking distances to Green Spaces shown in Table 12. Issues affecting access to and within Green Spaces are covered in Chapter 4.

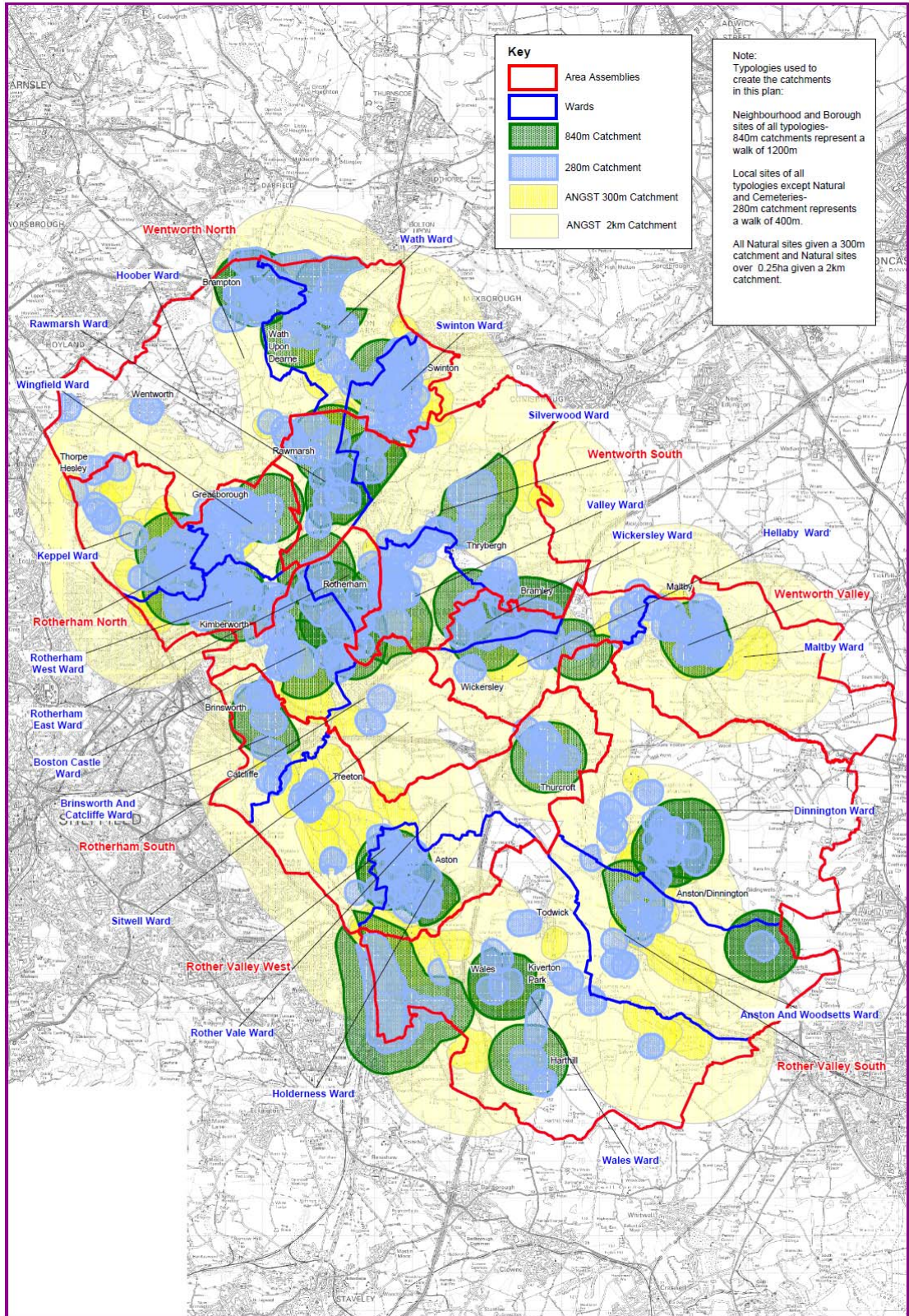
The audit catchment areas took into account major obstacles where walking routes are severed, for example by major roads, railways and rivers.

Catchment areas for all audited sites are shown in Figure 3. These are based on the proposed accessibility standards shown above, with local site catchments shaded blue and Neighbourhood and Borough site catchments in green. The then government agency, English Nature, proposed its own standards for access to natural Green Space in towns (ANGST) in 1995. The standards depend on the size of the Green Space, including 300 metres radius for sites of more than 0.25 hectares, and 2000 metres radius for sites of 20 hectares or more. Figure 3 shows these catchment areas in gold for information only.

This diagram shows that the overwhelming majority of built up areas across the borough are within catchments for Local and Neighbourhood/Borough sites as defined by proposed accessibility standards. However, there are identified gaps where people do not have access to Green Spaces within the proposed standard walking distance.

Further gaps could arise through expansion of urban areas and increased demand. This should be taken into consideration when determining the need for Green Space within the Local Development Framework. The potential for open space currently inaccessible to the general public, for example school grounds, to help meet future increased demand should also taken into account in the Local Development Framework.

**Figure 3. Catchments of Audited Green Spaces based on proposed accessibility standards and English Nature ANGST standards**





### 5.11 Provision of New Green Space

Where new homes are developed outside the catchments of existing green spaces then in all but the smallest developments new green space would need to be provided to ensure the proposed accessibility standards are met. In such cases, a method is also needed to calculate the area of new green space needed for the new population it will serve.

It is proposed that in such cases 16 square metres of new green space is created per person, based on analysis of the populations living within 5 minutes walking distance of audited green spaces serving urban areas, subject to a minimum size of 2000 square metres (0.2 hectares) for all new green spaces. It is noted that this is in line with standards within existing Supplementary Planning Guidance applied by Rotherham Council, and will be subject to further scrutiny when incorporating into new planning policy.

### 5.12 Neighbouring authorities

People will use local Green Spaces regardless of administrative boundaries so it is important that any potential development and/or Green Space realignment which impacts on neighbouring authorities is discussed sub regionally, thus informing the implementation of this Strategy, consideration when monitoring and reporting progress.

#### Key Points

- Compared to some other metropolitan districts Rotherham has a large amount of accessible Green Space per person, with extensive reclaimed former mineral and industrial sites contributing to this
- Some Assembly Areas contain significantly more Green Space per person than others, and the proportions of difference types of Green Space vary from one part of the borough to another
- A value score has been calculated for each Green Space, based on its size, the number of people living within walking distance of it, and the availability of other Green Spaces within the vicinity
- The value of Green Spaces can be enhanced by linking them together, although further work needs to be done to identify where there is feasible
- By-laws prohibiting cycling and horse riding in some Green Spaces may need to be reviewed if such places are to support green travel choices fully
- Separate studies highlights the biodiversity value of Green Spaces and landscape character, but further work is needed to assess wider environmental value
- There are variations in the quality of Green Space, and a significant number of sites have been assessed as being high value but only low quality, highlighting the need for further site improvement

- A set of quality standards need developing to allow quantifiable site improvement to be pursued and measured
- A hierarchy of Green Spaces based on quality and value comprising 'Local', 'Neighbourhood' and 'Borough' sites is proposed as a basis for both quality and accessibility standards
- Accessibility standards of five minutes walking distance to reach a 'Local' Green Space and fifteen minutes to a 'Neighbourhood' or 'Borough' Green Space are proposed. There are currently a number of gaps in provision based on these proposed standards
- A quantity standard of 16 square metres of new open space per person is proposed for developments of new homes that are not within five minutes walking distance of a Green Space, with a minimum size of 0.2 hectares for any new Green Space
- The Local Development Framework will include plans for future housing, and the effect this will have on demand needs to be considered in planning future green space provision
- The Green Spaces audit represents a snapshot in time and did not cover sites of less than 0.2 ha, and will therefore need to be regularly reviewed and revised to support future decisions
- Green Space provision bordering Rotherham is likely to be used by people living in Rotherham and needs to be taken into account in the implementation of this Strategy.

## **6. Site management and resources**

### **6.1 Site ownership**

#### **6.1.1 The Borough Council**

The majority of publicly accessible Green Space in Rotherham is owned by the Borough Council, having been acquired over many years, primarily for public amenity. Recently this has continued with the adoption of substantial tracts of land reclaimed from former coal workings and other industrial sites, as well as open space created within new housing developments. Since 2000 the amount of open space being adopted by the Council has declined, reflecting resource limitations. However, local planning policy has continued to require the provision of new open space within most housing developments, and consequently developers have increasingly had to make alternative arrangements for the management of such sites.

Historically, each Green Space was assigned to a particular service area committee with power to make decisions regarding the space and its management. With the advent of the Cabinet system these powers and responsibilities have been transferred to the relevant Cabinet Member. In practice, day to day management of Green Spaces is undertaken by one or more service department within the remit of each Cabinet Member. The principal departments with responsibility for Council-owned Green Spaces are as follows:-

- Culture and Leisure – town and country parks, recreation grounds, sports pitches, countryside sites, allotments, public open space, play areas
- Streetpride – highway verges and islands, woodlands, public rights of way (e.g. rural footpaths)
- Planning and Regeneration – open space on development land
- Neighbourhoods and Adult Services – open space serving public housing estates including some recreation grounds, cemeteries and crematoria (but see section 6.1.2 below), grounds of departmental establishments
- Children and Young People's Services – school grounds

In addition to the departmental responsibilities above, the Asset Management Service has a strategic role in managing the Council's properties, including land and buildings. Amongst other things, they deal with property that has been declared surplus to the requirements of the administering department, seeking the most beneficial new use or financial return through disposal.

#### **6.1.2 Other landowners**

Many other bodies own accessible Green Space. Although the overall areas involved are smaller, there are parts of the borough where such provision is more common than land owned by the Council. Amongst the other Green Space providers are parish councils, Coalfields Industry Social Welfare Organisation, the church, and private landowners.

### **6.1.3 Leased land and partnerships**

The Council can lease land to commercial, community or other bodies. In some cases land can be managed more sustainably in this way. Community trusts, backed by the necessary resources, may be particularly effective in this respect, although there is limited experience of such approaches in Rotherham. Alternatively, land which has limited strategic value may be leased rather than disposed of; this allows the site to be taken back under direct Council control if needed at a future date. Whilst such arrangements can offer benefits, it is important to acknowledge that they also involve risks and liabilities for the body leasing the land, particularly where continued public access is required.

Examples of leases on Council-owned land include the golf courses at Grange Park and Rother Valley Country Park, the children's amusements at Clifton Park, and grazing land at various locations.

There are plans to lease the Pithouse West site to a commercial company for the development of a major leisure destination, and Rother Valley Country Park has been leased since 2009 to the developer of the Pithouse West site in the run up to this agreement. Together, these sites are provisionally designated as 'Borough Green Spaces' in this Strategy. The possible impact of such leases on the implementation of the Strategy therefore needs to be noted.

The Council can also enter into partnerships with the private sector for the provision of services; this can include responsibility for land. The most important examples of this to date is a partnership with 2010 Rotherham Ltd to manage former Council-owned housing and associated open spaces, and with Dignity plc to manage bereavement services including Council-owned cemeteries.

### **6.1.4 Common land**

The law surrounding common land is complex and there is no clear definition of common land, although the Commons Act 1965 provided for registration of such land. There are a number of areas of registered common land in Rotherham and most is privately owned.

The term 'common land' derives from the fact that certain groups and individuals other than the owner enjoy rights over the land. There is statutory right of access on foot to nearly all registered common land under the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000. In the past, there has been no clear guidance in law about how common land should be maintained, although the Commons Act 2006 has introduced provision for the establishment of Statutory Commons Councils to take on this responsibility, subject to local agreement. In Rotherham, the Council's Culture and Leisure department currently oversees common land, most of which is classified as 'natural' Green Space. There is typically relatively little management of such sites in common with many other natural Green Spaces in the borough.

## **6.2 Looking after Green Spaces**

The provision of land for public access and enjoyment requires continuing effort to ensure that such sites are safe, clean and fit for purpose. This involves a wide range of management and maintenance functions; the extent and nature of these functions varies depending on the type of site, with designated parks generally requiring the greatest input and natural sites the least.

The following sections focus on land in public ownership, as there is little available information about management of privately owned Green Spaces. In some cases a number of different bodies have responsibility for different aspects of the same Green Space. National guidance recommends a move away from such an approach towards integrated management and maintenance with accountability and resources being clearly assigned to a single body, helping to deliver a more efficient and seamless service.

The development and use of management plans, particularly for larger, more important Green Spaces, is also recommended to ensure continuity and adequate resourcing of site management and maintenance.

### **6.2.1 Green Space management**

Management of Green Spaces is not simply grounds maintenance. It may also include delivery of services and events for visitors, monitoring usage, dealing with reports of vandalism and nuisance behaviour, and ensuring site security. The need to protect Green Spaces and the facilities within them is important; investment in improvements can be wasted if these issues are not addressed.

Dealing with anti-social behaviour and encouraging responsible use have been identified through consultation as a local priority. Land owners are often unable to adequately deal with such issues; consequently they are increasingly being dealt with through multi-agency approaches involving the Police, the Council, other members of Safer Neighbourhood Teams and the community. Successful methods, where resources allow, include staffing parks and using CCTV both as a deterrent and to provide evidence for prosecutions.

Some Green Spaces are covered by by-laws, some of which were last revised over thirty years ago and do not necessarily reflect current concerns. The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 gives Councils new powers to make control orders covering dogs and litter. They can be more effective than by-laws because they allow Council officers to issue on-the-spot fixed penalties, rather than having to follow legal processes.

Many safety and security problems can be avoided by careful planning and design. In the case of new buildings, the 'Secured by Design' scheme is intended to guide the project to minimise the risk of break-ins, fire and vandalism. There is not an equivalent scheme for landscape design at present, but the opportunity exists to explore design options with Community Safety Officers and others with relevant experience such as CABESpace. For example,

Green Spaces are generally less susceptible to vandalism and users feel safer where there is a degree of natural surveillance from surrounding properties or from well-used footpaths passing or crossing the site. In some situations lighting can improve safety leading to increased use of sites after dark. However, this has to be weighed against the risk of attracting anti-social behaviour.

### **6.2.2 Green Space management standards**

The way that sites are managed varies depending on the practice and policies of the owner. The varied ownership arrangements for Green Spaces in Rotherham lead to differing management standards across the borough.

The Green Flag award criteria (see section 5.4.1) are increasingly being used as a national standard for Green Space management. They include a requirement for each site to have its own five year management plan. Such plans have been prepared for a number of Council-owned sites. Much of the Council's woodland estate is covered by similar management plans and has achieved Forestry Stewardship Accreditation.

ISO9001 is an accreditation standard for quality management including a set of procedures that cover all key processes, record keeping, monitoring and regular review of processes to ensure effectiveness and continual improvement. In 2009 all Council Culture and Leisure services were awarded ISO9001 certification following external audit inspections. This gave assurance that their Green Spaces are being managed in an efficient manner against nationally recognised and tested standards.

The current diverse and often complicated arrangements for the management of Green Spaces across the borough can stand in the way of the delivery of an efficient, high quality service to customers. This Strategy aims to address this situation by establishing a shared vision and a co-ordinated approach to achieving this through agreed standards and priorities.

### **6.2.3 Green Space development**

Ideally, development should include consultation with local people. For example, the Council's Culture and Leisure Service has worked in partnership with several Friends Groups and other community groups to produce park masterplans. This approach has been of great value in establishing priorities for action reflecting community concerns and aspirations.

A masterplan considers the park as a whole, so individual features such as play areas, footpaths and planting contribute to the greater whole. It minimises conflict between different uses and with neighbours. This method of identifying a shared and sustainable vision for specific sites has led to great success in external funding bids to support improvement, as detailed in section 6.3 below.

As with site management, how Green Spaces are developed varies depending on ownership. In some cases this happens only rarely or in an ad hoc way due to lack of resources and organisation, creating further variation in standards.

#### 6.2.4 Grounds maintenance

The most time and resource consuming aspect of Green Space management is its maintenance. In formal Green Spaces such as parks and outdoor sports facilities the maintenance requirements should include exacting standards to ensure safe and usable playing surfaces, and well maintained and attractive landscape areas to meet public satisfaction requirements.

Grounds maintenance is provided at the majority of Council-owned Green Spaces by Streetpride, having been brought back in-house in 2010 after a period of contracted service delivery. This includes urban parks, recreation grounds and open space owned by Culture and Leisure, Green Space serving Council housing areas, and highway verges.

For some time the Borough Council has also provided grounds maintenance at Green Spaces owned by other bodies, including Parish Councils and CISWO, through the same contract. However, resource limitations have led to a policy of not taking on maintenance for new land or facilities provided by such bodies.

The Council is obliged by law to deliver grounds maintenance at closed church yards on request, although ownership remains with the church. This responsibility extends to maintenance of structures e.g. walls, fences and footpaths within closed church yards, a requirement with significant financial implications given the age and condition of many such features. Grounds maintenance at open cemeteries is provided through the Council's management partner at these sites, Dignity.

Country parks and countryside sites are maintained by rangers in line with objectives set out in site-specific management plans. The integrated management and maintenance achieved through the country park model has been found to be very effective, and there is potential to adopt a similar approach in urban parks. For example, a team of gardeners was transferred into the park management team at Clifton Park in 2010 as part of the arrangements for improving standards through the current restoration project.

Normally, when a Green Space is leased by the Council to another body, responsibility for grounds maintenance is transferred at the same time. The capacity of the lessee to maintain and manage the site more effectively or economically than the Council is often a principal reason for leasing the site. For example, maintenance of the golf course at Grange Park has improved thanks to the specialist input of green keepers brought in by the club who now lease and manage the course.

### **6.2.5 Maintenance of new Green Spaces**

New Green Spaces are often created through planning conditions for example as part of new housing developments. In the past developers have been required to pay a 'commuted sum' when transferring new open space to the Council. This sum was intended to help pay for the care of the site, and was normally calculated as the cost of maintaining the Green Space for five years. In practice this sum is insufficient to ensure the long term maintenance of the Green Space.

Similar issues have arisen within other councils, and consequently a number now require contributions from developers that cover the cost of maintenance over much longer periods, typically fifteen or twenty years. These contributions are often deposited in interest-earning accounts to protect their value against the effects of inflation. Consideration of such an arrangement in Rotherham could help the Council to adopt and maintain new Green Spaces sustainably in the future.

### **6.2.6 Other maintenance**

The maintenance of other features in Green Spaces such as buildings, structures, footpaths and boundaries is generally the responsibility of the land owner or lessee. However, routine inspection and maintenance of equipped children's play areas in publicly accessible Green Spaces is carried out by Culture and Leisure in almost all cases, regardless of ownership. This allows a specialist resource to be shared across the borough with associated public safety benefits. Buildings and other structures on Council-owned Green Spaces are looked after by the Asset Management service.

## **6.3 Resources**

### **6.3.1 Revenue budgets**

Year on year revenue funding is critical to prevent the quality of landscape and facilities deteriorating after initial investment. Funding is also required to enable staffing levels in parks to be maintained and increased as appropriate, as has been identified as a priority through consultation with local people.

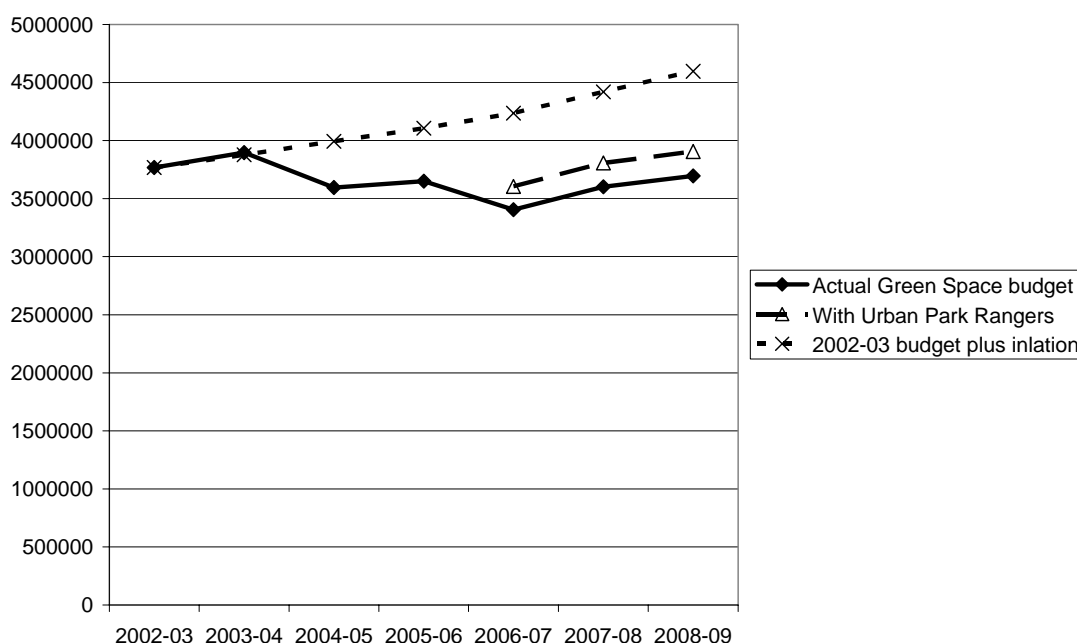
As noted above, the Council plays the principal role in maintaining accessible Green Spaces across Rotherham, including many owned by Parish Councils and CISWO. Almost all Council revenue funding for Green Space management and maintenance is channelled through the Culture and Leisure budgets. The scale of this funding is an important factor affecting the standards of Green Space provision.

Figure 4 shows actual Culture and Leisure net budgets available for Green Space management and maintenance from 2002/03 to 2008/09. It also shows how these budgets should have increased from 2002/03 in order to keep pace with the Retail Price Index ([www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)). There has been a reduction



of around 20% in the real value of revenue budgets over the period. This decline has been partially offset by the introduction in 2006-07 of a mainstream budget of around £200,000 to establish a permanent Urban Park Ranger service after three years of temporary funding. This was a direct response to views expressed by local people and experience gained by officers that the re-introduction of site-based staff was a high priority. The effect of this additional funding is also shown on Figure 4.

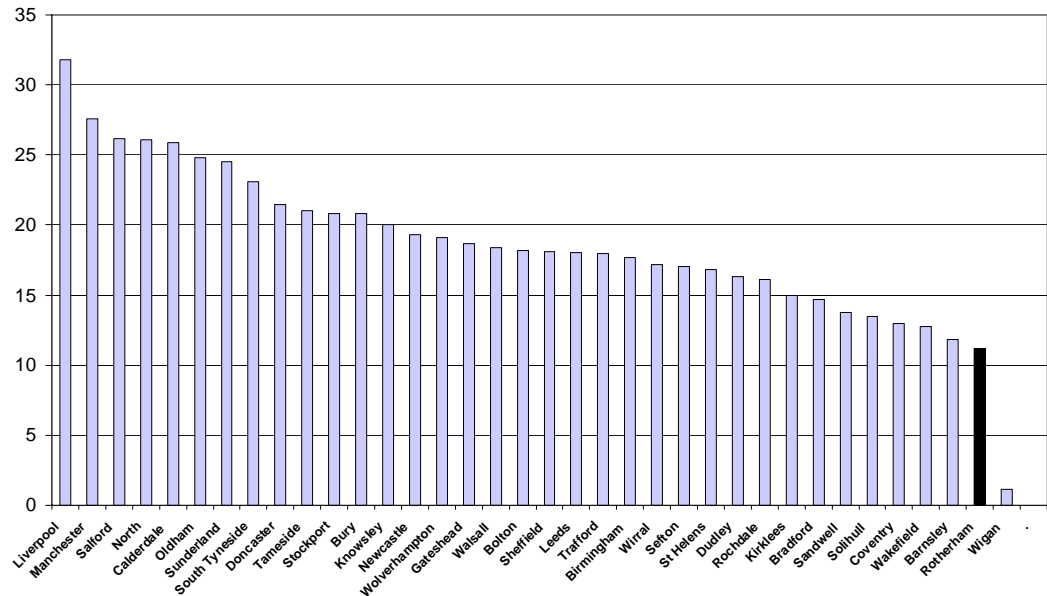
**Figure 4** Culture and Leisure Green Space and Urban Park Ranger Net Budgets since 2002-03 compared with effect of Inflation



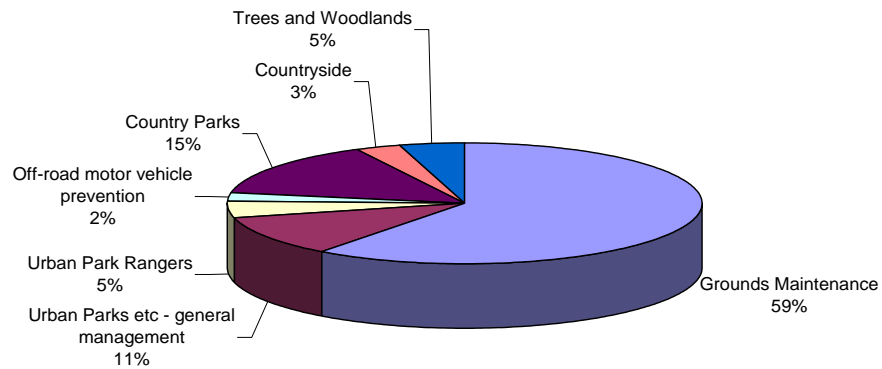
Figures published by the Audit Commission show that spend per head of population on parks and open spaces in Rotherham in 2007-08 was lower than any other metropolitan authority except for Wigan where the function has been transferred to an independent trust. This is surprising given the relatively large quantity of Green Space per head in Rotherham shown by comparison with other selected local authorities (see section 5.3.1). The levels of spend for all metropolitan authorities are shown in Figure 5.

There are other Council budgets for Green Spaces related issues that sit outside Culture and Leisure’s remit. These include £513,000 for grounds maintenance of highway verges and £210,000 for maintenance and management of trees and woodlands in 2008-09. A budget of £100,000 was introduced in 2008-09 for the continuation of a very successful and acclaimed initiative to tackle off-road motor vehicle nuisance; this is an issue affecting Green Spaces and other land in Rotherham that had been identified as a priority for action through consultation. Figure 6 shows the proportions of the total combined Council Green Space budgets allocated for different purposes.

**Figure 5. Parks and Opens Spaces Net Spend per Head of Population 2007-08 (Audit Commission)**

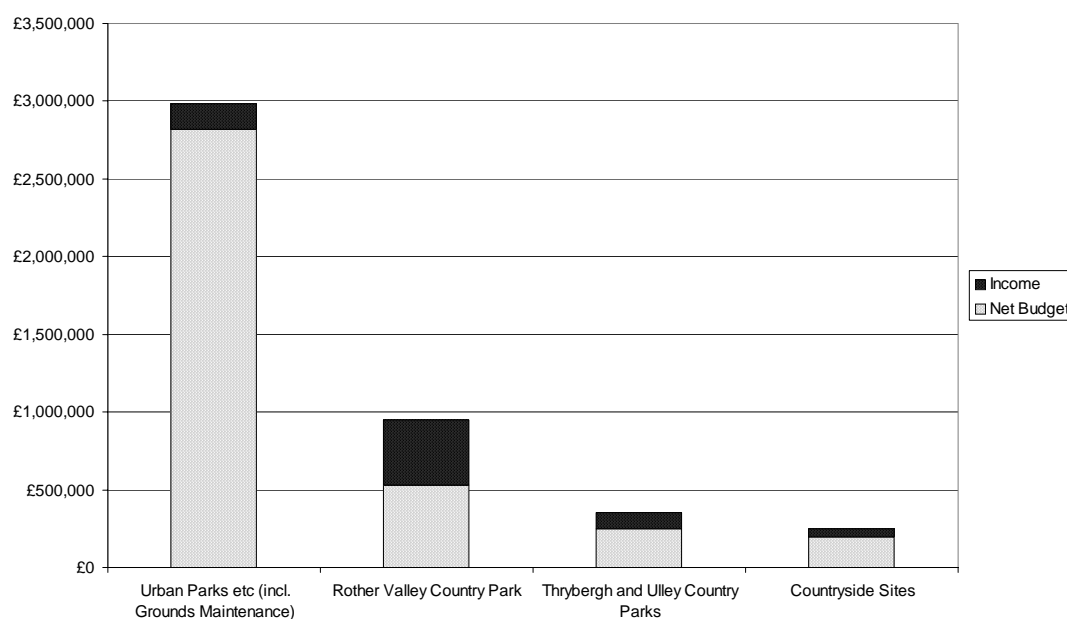


**Figure 6. Breakdown of Council Budgets for Green Space Functions (2008-09)**



Where income is generated from Green Spaces, e.g. from sports pitch hire, bowling greens, courses, and rent income, this income is used to offset the overall cost of running the service and help sustain higher standards of management and maintenance. Figure 7 shows how income in each area of Green Space service within Culture and Leisure supplements net budgets.

**Figure 7. Culture and Leisure Green Space Gross Budgets showing contributions from income (2008-09)**



A relatively large proportion (44%) of the cost of running Rother Valley Country Parks is met from income, compared to 29% for the other country parks and only 5% for urban parks, recreation grounds and sports pitches.

The Council continues to explore ways to reduce costs and increase income to minimise the impact of restricted budgets; savings have been achieved through introducing more efficient ways of working and by leasing land and facilities.

### 6.3.2 External funding

Green Spaces nationally have suffered gradual decline due to the age of facilities, wear and tear, and lack of investment. Whilst revenue budgets include some provision for routine repairs and maintenance, there is little provision for Green Space development. Consequently, the need for widespread site improvement became urgent by the year 2000 and obtaining capital funding became an increasingly important focus of activity for the Council, as it remains to this day.

External funding has been a very important source of finance for Green Space improvement. This reflects the growing awareness nationally of the social and environmental value of Green Spaces. In some cases funding can only be applied for via community organisations, and the Council has supported a number of successful bids by Friends Groups and similar bodies.

There has been considerable success in attracting external funding for example through various Lottery funds, Landfill Tax Credit schemes, Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder, and Single Regeneration Budgets, as shown in Table 13.

Much of this work has focused on Green Spaces in Council target areas for investment in an effort to contribute to closing the gap between the quality of life in the least well-off parts of Rotherham and the borough average.

**Table 13.** Summary of External Funding Invested in Green Space Improvements since 2002/03.

Source	Total Value	Projects Supported
Aggregates Tax	£85,000	Improvements at Coronation Park, Maltby
Awards for All	£33,300	Various Friends Group projects
BIG Lottery – Children's Play	£655,841	New and improved play facilities across borough
BIG Lottery – Transforming your Space	£653,685	Four new skate parks, new and improved play areas across borough,
BIG Lottery/ Barclay Spaces for Sport/ Hanson Environmntl	£114,000	New skate park at Maltby Manor Field
Countryside Agency	£69,627	Doorstep Green – Coronation Park, Maltby
Fair Share	£59,788	Friends of Barkers Park – new Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) and children's play area
Football Foundation	£221,575	New pavilion at Canklow Recreation Ground
Heritage Lottery Fund	£4,941,000	Clifton Park restoration (£4.8 million), Herringthorpe Valley Park Heritage Trail, Boston Park proposals
Living Spaces	£60,500	Bradgate Park Sensory Garden and Cherry Tree Park, Maltby
Housing Pathfinder (Neighbourhood Investment)	£276,283	Environmental improvements at Green Spaces in Maltby, Dinnington and North Anston
Neighbourhood Renewal Fund	£191,555	New MUGA in Swinton, 'Walks for Health' waymarked routes, 'Bikeability' cycles for disabled users, and environmental improvements
Play Pathfinder	£2,621,142	Clifton Play Park, new adventure play area, 28 play areas improved across Rotherham, plus activity
Shanks First	£50,000	Bradgate Park MUGA, play and improved access
S. Yorks Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder	£2,182,835	Footpaths, fencing and other infrastructure improvements at Clifton, Bradgate, Valley, Herringthorpe Playing Fields, Rawmarsh etc
Sport England	£76,000	Canklow Recreation Ground pitch improvements
SRB3 Places to Go	£20,000	Maltby Coronation Park improvements and new skate areas at Clifton and Wales
SRB4	£902,756	Canklow Rec, Ferham, Bradgate, play, MUGAs, footpath improvements, CCTV, fencing, skate area
SRB6/Objective One	£990,241	Herringthorpe, East Dene and Clifton area, park and allotment improvements
Surestart	£90,000	Ferham, Bradgate and Maltby Coronation Parks - new play areas for younger children
Town and Parish Councils	£26,500	Improvements at Maltby Coronation Park and new skate area at Wales Recreation Ground
Waste Recycling Environmental	£413,000	Various park infrastructure improvements, new play areas, skate areas, 'parks welcome' schemes across borough
Miscellaneous other	£29,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£14,703,128</b>	

### **6.3.3 Council capital funding**

Funding has also been made available from the Council's own capital programme, usually as match funding in order to secure external grants. This has amounted to around £2 million since 2002/03 and shows the success that has been had in using Council capital, leveraging in £7.50 of external funding for every £1 of Council money.

A large amount of Council funding was committed for the restoration of the dam at Ulley Country Park following the floods of June 2007, and the park is due to reopen in 2010. This investment is expected has been around £3 million, and demonstrates the Council's long term commitment to the borough's key Green Spaces.

It is recognised that many other priorities have to be met from Council funds, and that the amount of money the Council has been able to raise from sale of assets has been reduced due to the current state of the property market; therefore a clear benefit to the achievement of the Council's aims and objectives must be highlighted in seeking further funding from this source.

### **6.3.4 Section 106 agreements**

Another potentially valuable source of resources for new or improved Green Spaces is through the planning system. Developers can be required to provide new Green Spaces or funds to pay for site enhancement through Section 106 agreements which become a condition of planning permission. They can also include commuted sums that cover the extra cost of maintaining new Green Spaces over an agreed period.

The use of such agreements to improve Green Spaces in Rotherham has been limited; between 2002/03 and 2008/09 the total value of contributions is estimated to have been around £706,000. The Council is currently reviewing policy on Section 106 agreements, and this may open up the possibility of more substantial contributions to finance site improvements across the borough in future, with an emphasis on areas where new housing is increasing potential demand for Green Spaces.

### **6.3.5 Partnership working**

Additional impetus can be given to Green Space development through working in partnership with other organisations. For example, the Council has worked with Groundwork Dearne Valley over a number of years, developing projects to improve sites in various parts of the borough; typically, Groundwork provide a resource to consult with local people and seek external funding, with the Council providing design and arranging the delivery of the resulting scheme, and maintain it into the future.

Often community groups, such as Friends Groups, are able to access funding that would not otherwise be available to support Green Space improvement

schemes. This reinforces the value and importance of involving such groups fully in the planning and implementation of such projects. Exploration of possible future partnerships needs to continue to maximise opportunities to improve Green Spaces in Rotherham.

### **Key points**

- There are a range of organisations charged with responsibility for the ownership, management and maintenance of accessible Green Spaces around the borough, leading to inconsistent standards
- In some cases, Council owned Green Spaces could be managed more effectively and sustainably by a properly resourced community trust or similar body
- Achievement of many of the aims of this Strategy requires a more co-ordinated and collaborative approach by different Green Space providers.
- Green Flag criteria and the use of site management plans are amongst possible ways of achieving higher and more consistent standards at larger Green Spaces
- Safety and security are amongst people's top priorities, and can be addressed through multi-agency working, staff presence on site, CCTV, revised by-laws and new control orders, and careful site design; the Council has already provided additional funding in this area
- Higher standards can be achieved through local management integrating all aspects of site operation, maintenance and development, as at Country Parks
- The Council has a successful track history of gaining external funding for Green Space improvement, and has provided match funding where necessary
- Total revenue funding for Green Spaces in Rotherham has fallen to low levels when compared to other metropolitan districts in recent years, and this could make it difficult to sustain improvements achieved through capital funding.
- Parks income can make an important contribution to revenue budgets and thereby help to sustain higher quality standards
- The level of financial contribution secured from developers through planning agreements has not been sufficient to cover the long term cost to the Council of maintaining new open spaces to acceptable standards
- Opportunities to access external funding can be enhanced through partnership working and community involvement.

## 7 Recommendations

### Objective 1: Provide sufficient accessible Green Space to meet current and future demand efficiently and sustainably

#### Relevant Key Points

##### Chapter 1

- The Strategy considers publicly accessible Green Spaces, and the measures needed to ensure they meet future demand
- The government expects local authorities to prepare Green Space strategies to ensure that future planning policy reflects local need for open space and recreation
- There is a need to identify sites for housing and other development, but this must be balanced against people's needs for open space and recreation

##### Chapter 3

- The Local Development Framework is required to ensure future provision of open space and recreation meets local needs, and will be where recommended Green Space standards are incorporated into planning policy
- National organisations place emphasis on the need to ensure people have access to Green Spaces on foot, and that sites are safe, attractive and welcoming
- A number of other local plans and strategies include recommendations that will help to guide and support the implementation of the Green Space Strategy

##### Chapter 4

- Accessibility is a major factor in deciding whether to use a Green Space, with the majority of users getting to Green Spaces on foot and taking less than 15 minutes
- Consultation has shown that local people are mainly happy with the quantity of Green Space in the borough, but want it to be well maintained and improved

##### Chapter 5

- Relative to some other metropolitan districts Rotherham has a large amount of accessible Green Space per person, with extensive reclaimed former mineral and industrial sites contributing to this
- Some Assembly Areas contain more Green Space per person than others, and the proportions of difference types of Green Space vary from one part of the borough to another
- The Local Development Framework will include plans for future housing, and the effect this will have on demand needs to be considered in planning future green space provision

- A hierarchy of Green Spaces based on their quality and value and comprising 'Local', 'Neighbourhood' and 'Borough' sites is proposed as a basis for quality and accessibility standards
- Accessibility standards of five minutes walking distance to reach a 'Local' Green Space and fifteen minutes to a 'Neighbourhood' or 'Borough' Green Space are proposed. There are currently a number of gaps in provision based on these proposed standards

## Recommendations

### **1a. Introduce planning policy that reflects accessibility standards proposed in this Strategy.**

Policy should aim to ensure that all new homes are within 280 metres of a Local Green Space and 840 metres of a Neighbourhood or Borough Green Space (taking into account the effect on accessibility of features like rivers, main roads and railways). For example, this could require developers to provide new Green Space, to enlarge existing Green Spaces to extend their catchment areas, or to make improvements needed to upgrade a Local site to a Neighbourhood site. Policy should also protect against development that reduces accessibility to Green Spaces below these standards, and should protect Green Space that could serve areas allocated for future housing. Where new Green Space is required, provision of 16 square metres per person is proposed.

### **1b. Confirm current gaps in provision and develop plans to address them.**

This might be achieved by provision of new Green Spaces, or by reconfiguration or upgrading of existing Green Spaces.

### **1c. Review areas where there is limited variety of Green Space types**

through local consultation to determine whether there is a need to alter their character. This might include changing the primary use of Green Spaces which do not currently meet the needs of local residents. Such changes should aim to increase the diversity of Green Spaces in the area.

### **1d. Protect Green Spaces that have potential to meet future demand for playing pitches.**

Sites whose size and topography would accommodate playing pitches should be safeguarded if they are in parts of the borough where potential for growth in demand for pitches that cannot be met by current supply has been identified within the Playing Pitch Strategy.

### **1e. Consider alternative use of low value Green Spaces in areas with plentiful supply of Green Space.**

This could apply to the whole or part of such sites. Revenue savings achieved through no longer having to maintain the site should be used to improve maintenance standards at priority Green Spaces. Money from the sale of Council property is a corporate resource, and decisions about how to use it should take the objectives of this strategy into account. Change of use should be subject to further examination of local factors, and should only take place where the loss of Green Space is outweighed by the benefits of resulting improvements elsewhere. The potential value of any smaller unaudited Green Spaces in this regard should also be taken into account.



**Objective 2: Make Rotherham a safer, healthier and more attractive place to live and visit by ensuring Green Spaces are safe, clean and well designed, managed and maintained**

**Relevant Key Points**

**Chapter 1**

- Green Spaces are not a statutory service, but have a valuable contribution to make to local priorities including health, well-being and environment

**Chapter 3**

- National policy increasingly promotes the role of Green Spaces in addressing agendas such as health, children's development, community cohesion and environmental sustainability
- National organisations place emphasis on the need to ensure people have access to Green Spaces on foot, and that sites are safe, attractive and welcoming
- Green Spaces contribute to Rotherham Community Strategy priorities, and there is scope to increase this further

**Chapter 4**

- Consultation has shown that local people are mainly happy with the quantity of Green Space in the borough, but want it to be well maintained and improved
- Satisfaction with design, appearance and maintenance of Green Spaces is below the national average, with disrepair and lack of facilities being amongst the main reasons for not visiting Green Spaces
- Perceived safety fears are also amongst the reasons given by people for not visiting Green Spaces, with improved safety for children identified as one of the main priorities for action
- Other main priorities for improvement include toilets, park rangers, better maintenance, litter removal, play facilities, shelter, cafes and more events

**Chapter 5**

- A value score has been derived for each Green Space, based on its size, the number of people living within walking distance of it, and the availability of other Green Spaces within the vicinity
- There are large variations in the quality of Green Space, and a large number of sites have been assessed as being high value but only low quality, highlighting the need for further site improvement
- A hierarchy of Green Spaces based on their quality and value and comprising 'Local', 'Neighbourhood' and 'Borough' sites is proposed as a basis for quality and accessibility standards
- Quality standards do not currently exist, but are needed to guide site improvement

## Chapter 6

- Safety and security are amongst highlighted top priorities, and can be addressed through multi-agency working, staff presence on site, CCTV, revised by-laws and new control orders, and careful site design; the Council has already provided additional funding in this area
- Green Flag criteria and the use of site management plans are amongst possible ways of achieving higher and more consistent standards at larger Green Spaces
- Higher standards can be achieved through local management integrating all aspects of site operation, maintenance and development, as at Country Parks

## Recommendations

**2a. Adopt the hierarchy of Green Spaces proposed in this Strategy** as a basis for deciding where resources and effort should be focused to maximise the resultant benefits for local people. The proposed grades of Green Space are

- Local
- Neighbourhood
- Borough

**2b. Establish a prioritised programme of site improvement.** In practice, it will not be possible to achieve the desired quality standards across all Rotherham's Green Spaces in the immediate future. In order to achieve greatest impact within available resources agreement on short, medium and long term priorities is needed. It is suggested that the following factors guide site prioritisation:

- Quality/Value scores, with low quality/high value sites being high priorities;
- The existence of a development masterplan that reflects need already identified through local consultation and that can be used to attract funding;
- The availability of time-limited funding targeting a specific theme (for example children's play) or a geographical area or community.
- Response to issues of concern, e.g. dealing with the effects of flooding.

The resulting programme should be reviewed regularly to take into account changing circumstances.

**2c. Introduce quality standards for design, management and maintenance.** Provisional sets of quality standards for Local, Neighbourhood and Borough Green Spaces have been developed and are shown in Appendix 4. These include priorities identified through consultation, site audits and good practice guidance such as Green Flag Award criteria. They should be regarded as minimum target standards; at Neighbourhood and Borough Green Spaces, masterplans need to be produced to identify additional or amended requirements appropriate to each site.

**2d. Continue to enter selected Green Spaces annually for Green Flag awards.** This provides a means of benchmarking local quality standards against national standards. It is proposed that a maximum of six sites be submitted, although consideration should also be given to developing a supplementary internal assessment process for other principal sites based on Green Flag criteria.

**2e. Review and simplify the ownership of Council Green Spaces.** For example, whilst the majority of proposed Council-owned Neighbourhood Green Spaces are within Culture and Leisure, some are owned and managed by other services. In some cases, transferring such sites and associated resources into a single department could help to ensure a consistent standard of service delivery, backed up by concentrated specialist knowledge and resources.

**2f. Integrate grounds maintenance and management of key recreational Green Spaces.** By bringing together all aspects of site operation at principal Council-owned Green Spaces, it will make management more accountable and responsive to customer, and will also allow staff and financial resources to be deployed more flexibly to meet changing priorities. The current grounds maintenance contract finishes in November 2009; this gives the Council an opportunity not only to review how the operations might best be delivered, but also to create a more joined-up approach to the management of this important work.

**2g. Increase presence of staff at Green Spaces** in line with quality standards proposed within this Strategy. This could be achieved by expanding ranger teams, changing existing work patterns, and by training other staff such as grounds maintenance operatives to monitor sites as during their regular visits and report safety and security issues.

**2h. Revise Green Space by-laws and create new control orders.** Orders should be introduced where they would provide a more effective means to deal with common problems. The by-laws should be revised so that they are relevant to today's needs.

**2i. Ensure that all Green Space developments are 'Secured by Design'** or are designed with equivalent consideration to safety and security concerns

### **Objective 3: Target existing resources and secure new funding to improve priority Green Spaces and maintain them to higher standards**

#### **Relevant Key Points**

##### **Chapter 1**

- Lack of investment over recent decades has led to worn out facilities which can put people off using Green Spaces
- Other measures that can help improve Green Spaces include better use of resources, inward investment, adoption of standards and new ways of working

##### **Chapter 5**

- Relative to some other metropolitan districts Rotherham has a large amount of accessible Green Space per person, with extensive reclaimed former mineral and industrial sites contributing to this

##### **Chapter 6**

- The Council has a successful track history of gaining external funding for Green Space improvement, and has provided match funding where necessary
- Total revenue funding for Green Spaces in Rotherham has fallen to low levels compared to other metropolitan districts in recent years, and this may lead to difficulties in sustaining improvements achieved through capital funding.
- Parks income can make an important contribution to revenue budgets and thereby help to sustain higher quality standards; income levels need to be maximised in order to ensure maximum benefits.
- The level of financial contribution secured from developers through planning agreements has not been sufficient to cover the long term cost to the Council of maintaining new open spaces to acceptable standards

#### **Recommendations**

**3a. Develop a rolling three year investment programme** including priorities identified through implementation of this Strategy, and use as a basis for submitting bids to the Council's capital programme and to external funding bodies.

**3b. Ensure all capital investment is matched by appropriate revenue budgets** to ensure long-term sustainability of improvements. This could require reallocation of existing revenue budgets or agreed increases in such budgets. Scope to reallocate existing budgets could depend on identification of savings at lower priority sites, for example through altered maintenance regimes.

**3c. Explore opportunities for increased income generation** that are compatible with the character and value of Green Spaces, including investment

in new or improved customer services, and ensure that such income supplements rather than replaces core revenue funding.

**3d. Introduce planning policy or guidance to help achieve proposed standards of Green Space provision.** This should include a means to ensure that new development is accompanied by a Green Space contribution from the developer, in line with the following principles:-

- New Green Spaces should only be required where there would otherwise be a gap in provision as defined by the proposed accessibility standards (as stated above).
- Where new houses are already served by existing Green Spaces, then there should be a financial contribution, determined by the number of residential units being developed, to enhance existing Green Spaces in accordance with proposed quality standards.
- Contributions should also include a commuted sum equivalent to the cost of maintaining new Green Space or enhancements to existing Green Space for a period of thirty years.

## **Objective 4: Bring together different providers of Green Spaces and other partners to work towards agreed standards and priorities for Green Space provision**

### **Relevant Key Points**

#### **Chapter 5**

- Green Space provision adjacent to the borough is likely to be used by people living in Rotherham and needs to be taken into account in the implementation of this Strategy.

#### **Chapter 6**

- There are a range of organisations charged with responsibility for the ownership, management and maintenance of accessible Green Spaces around the borough, leading to inconsistent standards
- Achievement of many of the aims of this Strategy requires a more co-ordinated and collaborative approach by different Green Space providers.
- Opportunities to access external funding can be enhanced through partnership working and community involvement.

### **Recommendations**

**4a. Establish a Green Spaces Panel** to include all Council departments involved in Green Space provision, partners who have responsibility for Council Green Space (e.g. 2010 Rotherham, Dignity, lessees), and other land-owners who provide accessible Green Space. The main aims of the panel will be to:-

- co-ordinate implementation of the Green Space Strategy;
- discuss best practice;
- review standards and priorities;
- share performance data to allow progress to be monitored and reported.

It is proposed that membership by other land-owners will be a condition of continued Council support of the management of any of their Green Spaces, for example through grounds maintenance.

**4b. Establish a cross-boundary consultation protocol** to ensure that a sub regional approach is practiced in areas of mutual interest between neighbouring local authorities, and that information about Green Spaces close to boundaries is freely available.

**4c. Maintain and promote partnership working** between Green Space providers, Groundwork Trusts, funding bodies, NHS Trusts, Safer Neighbourhood Teams and other organisations with an interest in improving Green Spaces and increasing their use

**Objective 5: Actively involve communities in the development and management of Green Spaces to ensure that they reflect local needs, and are respected and cared for**

**Relevant Key Points**

**Chapter 1**

- The Strategy provides a platform for increased local community involvement and partnership working with other providers

**Chapter 4**

- Green Spaces are an ideal environment for volunteer activity, and there are significant opportunities to expand this.

**Chapter 6**

- In some cases, Council owned Green Spaces could be managed more effectively and sustainably by a properly resourced Community Trust or similar body
- Opportunities to access external funding can be enhanced through partnership working and community involvement.

**Recommendations**

**5a. Create new opportunities for volunteering** by extending the coverage of existing volunteer development plans to include all principal Green Spaces, and by further developing partnerships with Voluntary Action Rotherham and other volunteering organisations. These plans will be inclusive, catering for people of different abilities, ages and social backgrounds, and will be monitored by collecting more comprehensive information about volunteering.

**5b. Maintain support for Friends Groups** and similar community organisations by providing guidance and practical assistance, and working in partnership with them to achieve agreed objectives including site improvement projects and public events in Green Spaces. We will also encourage established friends groups to advise emergent groups on sustainable development

**5c. Explore the creation of properly resourced Community Trusts** or similar bodies as an alternative way to manage and maintain green spaces where sufficient local interest and capacity is present

**Objective 6: Raise people’s awareness of Green Spaces, and make sites and activities within them accessible and attractive to all groups and individuals, thereby increasing use and satisfaction and contributing to health and community cohesion**

### Relevant Key Points

#### Chapter 4

- Green Spaces across Rotherham attract a high number of visits, and are the most commonly visited cultural facility for adults and one of the top four activities for young people
- More complete and up to date information needs to be provided to people about Green Space sites and activities within them
- Marketing of Green Spaces should target as a priority people who use Green Spaces only occasionally or not at all.
- Repeat surveys are needed to confirm usage levels and identify changes over time

### Recommendations

**6a. Regularly obtain and analyse information about Green Space users and non-users** including GreenSTAT questionnaires, event participation data, annual events programme feedback and other surveys

**6b. Introduce a Green Spaces Marketing plan** based on evidence from surveys, to raise awareness of the benefits of green spaces and to guide site improvement and delivery of events and activities aimed at increasing usage and satisfaction and ensuring equality of access for all; review the plan at regular intervals to assess its impact in terms of frequency of visits and satisfaction scores taken from repeat surveys

**6c. Produce accessible information about all principal sites and services** to agreed standards. This should include both printed and web-based information, and be monitored to assess how effective it is in reaching all sections of the community. At sites with notice boards state clearly what standards people can expect.



**Objective 7: Improve the environmental sustainability of Rotherham through biodiversity, landscape protection, reducing surface water runoff and other measures****Relevant Key Points****Chapter 3**

- National policy increasingly promotes the role of Green Spaces in addressing agendas such as health, children's development, community cohesion and environmental sustainability
- A number of other local plans and strategies include recommendations that will help to guide and support the implementation of the Green Space Strategy

**Chapter 5**

- Separate studies identify the biodiversity value of Green Spaces and landscape character, but further work would be needed to assess wider environmental value

**Recommendations**

**7a. Use the Local Wildlife Site System** as a means to check for biodiversity importance whenever considering proposals that would change the character of existing Green Spaces, and seek to minimise adverse ecological impacts.

**7b. Refer to the borough landscape character assessment** to identify the important elements, in particular Green Spaces, that define the distinctive quality and character of different parts of the borough, so that these can be protected through the Local Development Framework

**7c. Consider and protect the wider environmental value of Green Spaces** by developing a protocol for assessing climatic, drainage and similar impacts of developments affecting Green Spaces.

## Objective 8: Exploit opportunities to link Green Spaces to develop a well-managed green network across the borough

### Relevant Key Points

#### Chapter 3

- A number of other local plans and strategies include recommendations that will help to guide and support the implementation of the Green Space Strategy

#### Chapter 5

- The value of Green Spaces can be enhanced by linking them together, although further work needs to be done to identify where this is achievable
- By-laws prohibiting cycling in some Green Spaces would need to be reviewed if such places are to support green travel choices fully

### Recommendations

**8a. Protect and enhance existing green links.** This will include Green Spaces that are easily accessible from strategically important routes as identified in the Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan, and those that adjoin one or more neighbouring Green Space to form a linear feature. Enhancement could include creation of new access between adjacent Green Spaces, or between a Green Space and a public right of way, or new planting along such a route to improve its wildlife and landscape value. Management issues such as dealing with litter, dog-fouling and anti-social behaviour also have to be considered. Potential links should be identified and protected within the Local Development Framework land use allocations.

**8b. Create new green links between existing Green Spaces.** This may be difficult to achieve where a Green Space is surrounded on all sides by dense built up areas. However, opportunities can arise in connection with new developments. The possibility of creating or extending green links should be considered at an early stage in discussions between the Planning Service and developers regarding open space provision in new developments. Consideration should be given to the management and maintenance of such links at the planning stage.

**8c. Review Green Space by-laws in respect of cycling and horse-riding** in specific locations where this would encourage use of green links for healthy and environmentally friendly travel without causing unacceptable disturbance to other users.

## **8. Monitoring and Strategy review**

### **8.1 Maintaining accurate data**

Since the audit was undertaken in 2004/05 there have been changes to Rotherham's Green Spaces. These will affect quality and value scores and need to be taken into account when implementing the Strategy recommendation.

Having an up to date data set on which to make decisions about future use and improvements for Green Spaces is going to be increasingly important to support the Strategy and action plan and there is a need to develop a map based tool to identify the impacts of any changes to the Green Space profile.

In addition to acknowledging the time lapse since the audit, it is important to be aware of potential gaps or changes in the data on which the Strategy is based, including:

- sites less than 0.2 hectare which were not included in the audit,
- green spaces that are not currently accessible to the public, but that could be opened to the public in future to meet increasing demand
- Any external changes which could affect the quality and value scores, for example new housing estates increasing numbers of people living within an accessibility catchment, or new roads creating a barrier to access,
- Improvements within existing Green Spaces
- The creation of new Green Spaces, or loss of Green Spaces
- Any changes in the primary purpose of a Green Space; for example from an amenity Green Space to a natural site.

The Strategy action plan must incorporate methods for acknowledging possible gaps and inaccuracies in the existing data set, and ensure these are taken into account when formulating planning policy, plans for any alterations to Green Space provision.

### **8.2 Monitoring progress against actions**

As with any strategy, targets are needed against which progress can be monitored. A development group will meet to review progress as necessary against the set targets. Four high level indicators are proposed for this purpose, in line with the aims of the Strategy:-

**Indicator 1:** The proportion of the population living within easy walking distance of Green Spaces meeting defined quality standards

**Indicator 2:** The number of people who visit Green Spaces regularly

**Indicator 3:** The proportion of the population who are satisfied with Green Spaces

**Indicator 4:** The number of people participating in volunteer activity within Green Spaces

The precise definition of each of these indicators and measurement methods will be established as part of the formulation of an action plan following internal and partner consultation. Part of the consultation remit will be to allocate responsibility for monitoring and ensuring completion of tasks to named groups/individuals.

**8.3 Reviewing recommendations and actions**

Although the action plan will cover a five year period, many of the actions required to implement this Strategy will be of a longer duration, and some may not start until after the first five year period has ended. It is therefore proposed that the action plan be reviewed and extended annually from the end of its first year of implementation.

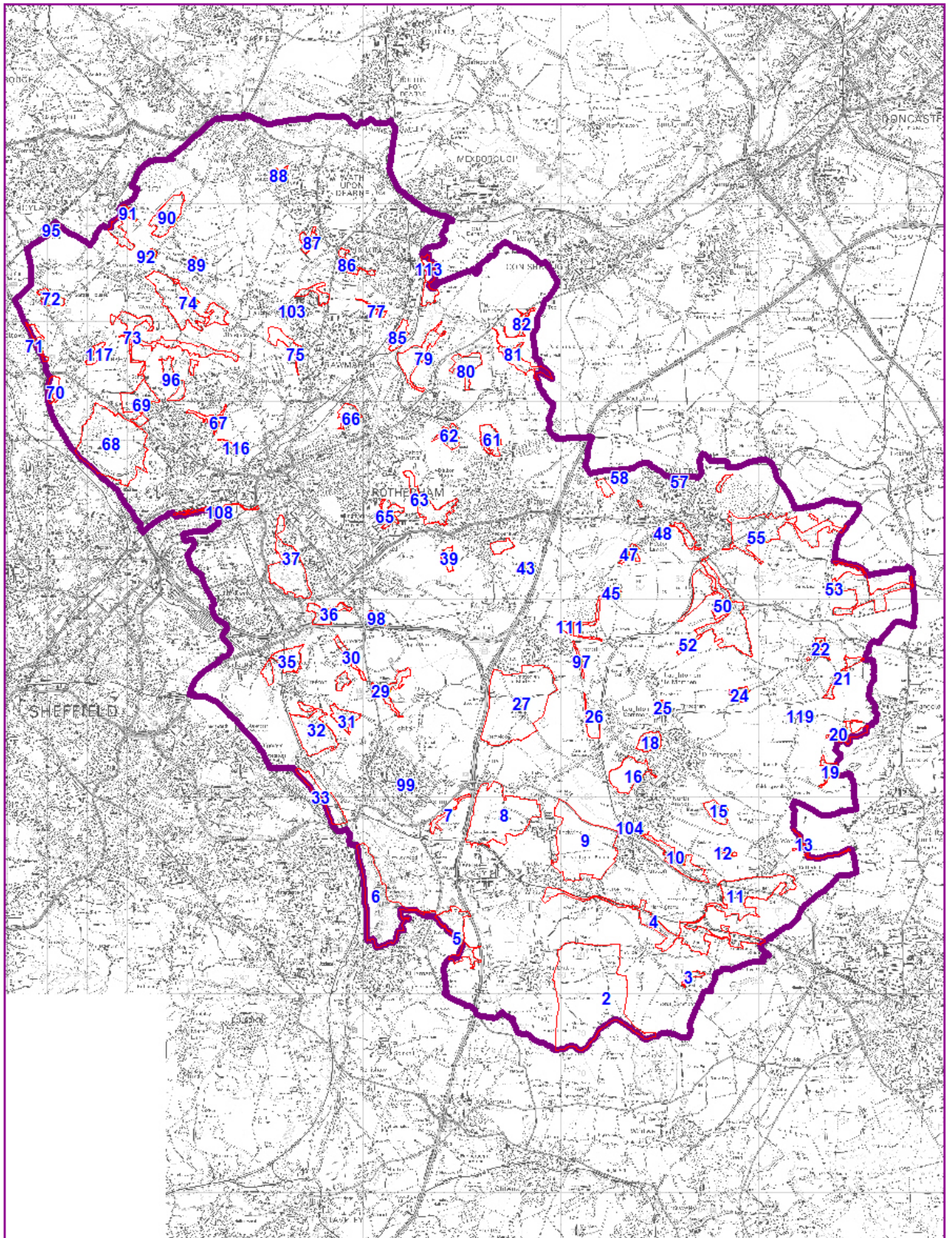
## APPENDIX 1

### Links to Other Strategies

Other Strategy	Lead for the other Strategy	Links with Green Space Strategy
<b>Rotherham Playing Pitch Strategy 2009</b>	Culture and Leisure, RMBC	Provides detailed assessment of demand for pitches. Could help to identify possible alternative use for green spaces
<b>Rotherham Play Strategy 2007-2012</b>	Culture and Leisure, RMBC	Informs the provision of formal playgrounds in green spaces and more informal play opportunities – to determine how green spaces could be improved.
<b>Rotherham Allotments Strategy</b>	Culture and Leisure, RMBC. Due 2011	Sits alongside it. Could help to identify possible alternative use for green spaces
<b>Rotherham's Biodiversity Action Plan 2004</b>	Culture and Leisure, RMBC	Will inform habitat protection and enhancement protection across the borough, including in green spaces
<b>Rotherham Local Wildlife Sites System and Biological Records Centre</b>	Culture and Leisure, RMBC	
<b>Active Rotherham - A Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity 2010-2020</b>	Culture and Leisure, RMBC. Will replace Rotherham Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2006-2009	Green Space Strategy will seek to contribute to key aim: increase levels of physical activity in Rotherham
<b>Rotherham Public Health Strategy 2006 (being refreshed)</b>	PCT Rotherham	Promote health benefits of green space
<b>Rotherham Local Development Framework</b>	Forward Planning team, RMBC	Overarching planning framework which will help shape future green space provision
<b>South Yorkshire Green Infrastructure Strategy</b>	Transform South Yorkshire	Emerging, will bring together at broad scale other environmental strategies and inform the LDF – green links
<b>Dearne Valley Eco Vision</b>	Sheffield City Region	Potential for green infrastructure improvements in the Dearne Valley

<b>Other Strategy</b>	<b>Lead for the other Strategy</b>	<b>Links with Green Space Strategy</b>
<b>South Yorkshire Local Transport Plan 2006-2011</b>	SYPTTE, South Yorkshire Councils	Focus on green links – e.g. cycling and public transport access to green spaces
<b>Rotherham Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan</b>	Streetpride, RMBC	Will inform consideration of development of a network of green links, linking important routes with green spaces
<b>Rotherham's Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2010-13</b>	Sustainability Partnership	Green spaces have a role in sustainable drainage, improving air quality and providing shade and cooling effects e.g. through trees/plants, and design of green space buildings.
<b>Don Catchment Flood Management Plan (draft 2010) and Rotherham Surface Water Management Plan (to be produced)</b>	Environment Agency	Green spaces have a role in sustainable drainage
<b>Living Don Strategy</b>	Sheffield Wildlife Trust	Potential to link riverside sites to green spaces sites in a green network. Environmental community involvement.
<b>Rotherham Housing Strategy</b>	Neighbourhoods, RMBC	Supports good quality infrastructure design

## APPENDIX 2 Local Wildlife Sites



**Rotherham candidate Local Wildlife Sites - May 2008**

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**ID Site****RMBC Owned Sites (25 sites)**

4	Chesterfield Canal & Pennyholme & Hawkes & Old Meadow
5	Norwood & Chesterfield Canal & Locks & Woodall & K
6	Rother Valley Country Park
18	Dinnington Open Public Space
29	Ulley Country Park
31	Treeton Wood
32	Treeton Dyke (Inc. Hail Mary & Falconer Woods)
34	Catcliffe Flash LNR
35	The Canyon & Flatts Farm Marsh & Tip
37	Canklow Wood & Boston Park & Reneville Bank
45	Carr Quarry
57	The Muddies
61	Silver Wood & Gulling Wood
64	Gibbing Greave Wood
65	Herringthorpe Wood & Great Bank
67	Bassingthorpe Spring & Hudson's Rough
68	Grange Park
69	Keppel's Field, Scholes Coppice & Bray Plantation
76	Warren Vale LNR & Roman Ridge
85	Kilnhurst Agricultural Letting & Hall Wood
87	Wath Wood & Boyd Royd Wood
88	Flatts Valley
101	Hazel Road Wood
116	Clough Streamside
117	Thorne Mine

**Non RMBC Owned Sites (81 sites)**

2	Loscar Common
3	Lob Wells Wood & Moor Mill Farm
4	Chesterfield Canal & Pennyholme & Hawkes & Old Mea
7	Nickerwoods & Ponds
8	Todwick Common (inc. Low Laithes & J31 verges)
9	Axle Lane
10	Anston Stones Wood
11	Lindrick Golf Course
12	Dewidales Wood
13	Woodsetts Woodlands
15	Swinston Hill & Bradshaw Woods
16	Dinnington Colliery Tip
19	Langold Holt
20	Langold Farm Wood
21	Ivy Lodge Plantation & Rough Wood
22	Firbeck Hall
24	Little & Long Thwaite Woods
25	Little Moor
26	Laughton Common
27	Brampton Common
29	Ulley Country Park
30	Ulley Brook & Marsh & Packman's Bridge Marsh & Bur
32	Treeton Dyke (Inc. Hail Mary & Falconer Woods)
33	Woodhouse Washlands
35	The Canyon & Flatts Farm Marsh & Tip
36	Whiston Meadows & Blue Man's Bower
39	Wickersley Gorse



42	Wickersley Wood
43	Stack's Farm & Kings Pond
44	Thurcroft Hall & surrounds
46	Carr Hill Quarry
47	Carr Wood
48	Hooton Levitt Wood
49	Maltby Dyke & Wood Lee Common
50	Roche Abbey Woodlands SSSI
52	Slade Hills
53	Sandbeck Park
55	Maltby Commons & Woodlands
58	Lilly Hall
59	Hellaby Bridge Brickworks
61	Silver Wood & Gulling Wood
62	Silverwood Tip & Odd Hill
63	Listerdale Wood
66	Aldwarke Sewage Works
70	Smithy Wood & Lady Clough
71	Hesley Wood
72	Barley Hole Springs
73	Wentworth Park Lakes
74	Wentworth Park
75	New Stubin Colliery Site & Incline
76	Warren Vale LNR & Roman Ridge
77	Collier Brook & Marsh
79	Thryberg Tip (Inc. Woodlands & Fatty Boyn's Ponds)
80	Thrybergh Country Park
81	Hooton Brook & Valley
82	Hooton Cliff Plantation
83	Back Lane, Hooton Roberts
84	Kilnhurst Ings
85	Kilnhurst Agricultural Letting & Hall Wood
86	Creighton & Piccadilly Woods
88	Flatts Valley
89	Hooper Stand
90	Rainborough Park
91	Simon Wood
92	Lee Wood
93	King's wood
95	Skiers Spring Wood
96	Rockingham Wood & Shepherd's plantation
97	Steadfolds Lane - Disused railway lines at Thurcroft
98	Revel Wood
99	Austen Park
102	Bullatree Farm
103	Monk Wood
104	Anston Brook Walk
105	St Martin's Church, Firbeck
108	Holmes Goit
111	Thurcroft Colliery
113	Kilnhurst Riverside
116	Clough Streamside
117	Thorne Mine
119	St Peters Church Letwell

*Sites occurring in both lists are part RMBC owned and part other ownership*

### APPENDIX 3

#### Audited Green Spaces

	TYPOLOGY	QUALITY	VALUE
<b>Wentworth North</b>			
NEIGHBOURHOOD SITES			
Swinton Miners Welfare	Outdoor sports	tbc	tbc
Brampton Sports Centre	Outdoor sports	LQ	HV
Highfield Park, Swinton	Parks	HQ	HV
Wath Community Park	Parks	HQ	HV
Manvers Lake and Surrounds	Parks	HQ	HV
Newhill Park	Parks	LQ	HV
LOCAL SITES			
Stubbin Lane green space	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Symonds Ave green space	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Hart Hill green space	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Church Street greenspace 2	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Thomas Street greenspace	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Station Street	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Cliffeield Road greenspace	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
broadway greenspace	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Woodlands Crescent greenspace	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Calcot Green	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Carlisle Street Greenspace	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Calladine Way	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Larkspur Close	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Celendine Rise	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Caraway Grove, Swinton	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Knollbeck Ave green space	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Westfield Road greenspace	Amenity green space	HQ	HV
Smithy Bridge Lane	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Packman Road Natural site	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Elsecar Road	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Well Road greenspace	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Tennyson Rise	Amenity green space	HQ	HV
West Street, Wath	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Church Street, Wath	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
St Biscay Way 2	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
All Saints Parish Church, Wath	Amenity green space	HQ	HV
Church Street greenspace 1	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Campsall Field Road green space	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Sandygate green space	Amenity green space	HQ	HV
Rig Drive greenspace	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Green Lane green space	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Stubbin Lane ecological Site	Natural	LQ	LV
Queen's Street natural site	Natural	LQ	HV
Piccadilly Road natural site	Natural	HQ	LV
Warren Vale wood Road	Natural	HQ	HV
Moorland View natural site	Natural	LQ	HV
Wath Tip site	Natural	HQ	HV
Brook Dike	Natural	LQ	HV
Michael Croft greenspace	Natural	HQ	LV
Quarry Hill Road natural site	Natural	LQ	HV

	<b>TYOPOLOGY</b>	<b>QUALITY</b>	<b>VALUE</b>
Wath Wood	Natural	HQ	HV
Kilnhurst Ings	Natural	LQ	HV
Piccadilly Road Outdoor sports	Outdoor sports	HQ	HV
Wath Road park	Outdoor sports	LQ	HV
Barnsley Road Rec, Thorpe Hesley	Outdoor sports	LQ	HV
Occupation Road Park, Harley	Outdoor sports	LQ	HV
Clayfield Lane park, wentworth	Outdoor sports	HQ	HV
White Bear Estate, Wath	Outdoor sports	LQ	HV
Thomas street park	Parks	LQ	HV
Horsefair Park	Parks	LQ	HV
Queen's Street Park, Swinton	Parks	LQ	HV
Piccadilly POS, Swinton	Parks	LQ	HV
Packman Road Play Area	Parks	HQ	LV
West Melton park	Parks	LQ	HV
Sandygate New Road Park	Parks	HQ	LV
Avenue Road park, Wath	Parks	LQ	HV
<b>CEMETERIES</b>			
Brampton Rd cemetery	Cemeteries	HQ	LV
Wath-upon-derne cemetery	Cemeteries	HQ	HV
Church of St Margarets	Cemeteries	HQ	HV
<b>Rotherham North</b>			
<b>NEIGHBOURHOOD SITES</b>			
Bradgate Park	Parks	LQ	HV
Ferham Park	Parks	HQ	HV
Greasborough Park	Parks	HQ	HV
Barkers park	Parks	HQ	HV
Blackburn & Kimberrnorth Roundwalk NE	Parks	HQ	HV
<b>LOCAL SITES</b>			
Ox Close Ave	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Centenary roundabout	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
chantry vw	Amenity green space	HQ	HV
Fenton Road green 3	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Fenton Rd Green space 1	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Wilton Crecsent green space	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Kelford School	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Henley Rise green	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
oates close 2	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
oates close, Thornhill	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Wortley Road greenspace	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Town Lane green 2	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Town Lane green space 1, Greasbrough	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Windfield Rd green space	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Roughwood Road green	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Fenton Road green 2	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Wagon Rd green space, Munsbrough	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Barbot Hill Rd green	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Lapwater Road greenspace	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Town Lane greenspace 2	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Ochre Dike Walk greenspace	Amenity green space	LQ	HV

	<b>TYOLOGY</b>	<b>QUALITY</b>	<b>VALUE</b>
Coach Road green	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Wheatley Rd green space	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Town Lane green 1	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Kestrel Avenue greenspace	Amenity green space	HQ	HV
Eldertree Road greenspace, Thorpe Hesley	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Upper Wortley Road green space	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Upperwortly Road	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Wortley Road 2	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
South Street 2	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
South Street 1	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
South Street 1	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Meadowhall Road	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Winterhill	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Droppingwell Road 1	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Wortley Road 1	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Great Park Road	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Droppingwell Road 2	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Hill Top Close	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Wortley Rd verge	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Barber Balk Rd	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Hudson's Rough	Natural	LQ	HV
Meadow Bank Road	Natural	LQ	HV
Wilton Subway	Natural	HQ	LV
Henley Way	Natural	LQ	HV
Fenton Road	Natural	LQ	HV
Munsborough Lane	Natural	LQ	LV
Hesley Lane green space	Natural	HQ	LV
Brook Hill greenspace	Natural	LQ	HV
Wentworth Rd	Natural	LQ	HV
Upper Wortley Rd green space 2	Natural	LQ	LV
Upper Wortley Rd natural site	Natural	LQ	HV
Keppels field	Natural	HQ	HV
Bray's Plantation and Scholes Plantation	Natural	HQ	HV
Baring Road	Natural	LQ	HV
Richmond Park Avenue	Natural	LQ	HV
Blackburn and Kimberworth roundwalk west	Natural	HQ	LV
the Motte	Natural	LQ	LV
Blackburn and Kimberworth roundwalk west	Natural	LQ	HV
Roughwood outdoor sports	Outdoor sports	HQ	HV
St Pauls Field	Outdoor sports	HQ	HV
Blackburn and Kimberworth roundwalk west pitches	Outdoor sports	HQ	HV
Grayson Rd rec	Parks	LQ	HV
Bar Park, Thorpe Hesley	Parks	LQ	LV
King Georges field, Thorpe Hesley	Parks	HQ	LV
Kimberworth Community Park	Parks	LQ	HV
Kimberworth Community Park	Parks	LQ	HV
<b>CEMETERIES</b>			
Masborough Cemetery	Cemeteries	HQ	HV
Greaseborough cemetery	Cemeteries	HQ	LV
Church Street Cemetery	Cemeteries	LQ	LV
Holy Trinity Church	Cemeteries	HQ	HV
St Thomas'	Cemeteries	HQ	HV

	<b>TYOPOLOGY</b>	<b>QUALITY</b>	<b>VALUE</b>
<b>Wentworth South</b>			
<b>BOROUGH SITE</b>			
Thrybergh CP	Parks	HQ	HV
<b>NEIGHBOURHOOD SITES</b>			
Gibbing Greave Wood	Natural	HQ	HV
Claypit Lane rec	Outdoor sports	LQ	HV
Rawmarsh Leisure Centre	Outdoor sports	LQ	HV
Victoria Park	Parks	LQ	HV
Valley Park	Parks	HQ	HV
<b>LOCAL SITES</b>			
Ryan Place green	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Marriott Place green, Rawmarsh	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Barber's Ave green space	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Roman Crescent green space	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Hague Avenue green space	Amenity green space	HQ	HV
Haugh Road green space	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
High Street corner green, Rawmarsh	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Kilnhurst Rd green space	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Vincent Rd Green	Amenity green space	HQ	HV
Ferndale Drive Green	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Woodlathes Farm Pond	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
hawksworth rd flats	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Park Close green space	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
thryburgh sports field	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
gulling wood drive	Amenity green space	HQ	HV
paddock drive 2	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Brecks Lane Green Space	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Old Gate Land Green Space, Thrybergh	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Dalton Lane	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Ridgeway	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Brierly road	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Wood Street Green Space, Thrybergh	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
School Street Green Space	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Farnworth Rd, E Herringthopre	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Fretwell Rd green space	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Conway Crescent green space	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Durham Places	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Infirmery Rd Hill	Natural	HQ	HV
New Meadows green corridor	Natural	LQ	LV
Dale Rd open space	Natural	LQ	HV
Moordale View open space	Natural	LQ	LV
Sandhill green link	Natural	HQ	HV
Gwyn Reed Nature Area	Natural	LQ	LV
Kilnhurst Rd pond	Natural	HQ	LV
Dysons plantation	Natural	HQ	LV
Birch Wood	Natural	LQ	HV
Warren Vale	Natural	HQ	LV
Old Warren Vale wood	Natural	HQ	LV
Heatons bank open space	Natural	LQ	HV

	<b>TYOPOLOGY</b>	<b>QUALITY</b>	<b>VALUE</b>
Ravenfield Park	Natural	HQ	HV
Firsby Reservoirs	Natural	HQ	HV
foljambe drive 2	Natural	LQ	LV
Aldwarke Locke Island	Natural	LQ	LV
Kilnhurst Ings	Natural	LQ	HV
School Lane rec, Parkgate	Outdoor sports	LQ	HV
Rawmarsh Miners welfare	Outdoor sports	LQ	HV
Hollings Lane green	Outdoor sports	HQ	HV
Sunnyside Rec	Outdoor sports	LQ	HV
Magna Road Rec (NOTE _ Incorrectly mapped)	Outdoor sports	HQ	HV
Silverwood Miners Welfare	Outdoor sports	LQ	HV
Kilnhurst Miners Welfare	Outdoor sports	HQ	LV
Sandhills park	Parks	HQ	LV
Herringthorpe Play Area	Parks	HQ	LV
Victoria Gardens, Kilnhurst	Parks	HQ	LV
<b>CEMETERIES</b>			
Rawmarsh Cemetery (Haugh Rd)	Cemeteries	LQ	HV
Rawmarsh Cemetery (High Street)	Cemeteries	HQ	HV
Rawmarsh Cemetery (Greasborough Lane)	Cemeteries	HQ	HV
Hawksworth Road cemetery	Cemeteries	HQ	LV
East Herringthorpe cemetery	Cemeteries	HQ	HV
StThomas Church	Cemeteries	HQ	LV
<b>Rotherham South</b>			
<b>BOROUGH SITES</b>			
Moorgate Cemetery	Cemeteries	HQ	HV
Canklow Wood	Natural	LQ	HV
Herringthorpe Playing Fields	Outdoor sports	HQ	HV
Boston Castle Park	Parks	LQ	HV
Clifton Park	Parks	HQ	HV
<b>NEIGHBOURHOOD SITES</b>			
Eldon Rd	Parks	HQ	HV
<b>LOCAL SITES</b>			
Castle Avenue green space	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Centenary Way green spaces	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Ickles Roundabout	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Norrel's Croft green	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Broom Valley Road green	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Shawsfield Road green	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
St Annes Road verge	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Ickles Lock POS	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
College Road	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Longfellow Drive 2	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Fitzwilliam Road 2	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Longfellow Drive green space	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Long Fellow Drive 1	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Far Lane green space	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
The Walk	Amenity green space	HQ	HV
Cowrakes Lane	Amenity green space	HQ	HV

	<b>TYOPOLOGY</b>	<b>QUALITY</b>	<b>VALUE</b>
Beaconsfield Road	Amenity green space	HQ	HV
Whiston Meadows	Natural	LQ	HV
Fitzwilliam Road 1	Natural	LQ	LV
Mowbray Gardens centre	Outdoor sports	HQ	LV
Whiston Methodists Cricket Club	Outdoor sports	HQ	HV
Canklow Road MUGA & Play Area	Parks	HQ	HV
<b>CEMETERIES</b>			
church street 3	Cemeteries	HQ	HV
Winston Parish Church	Cemeteries	HQ	HV
<b>Wentworth Valley</b>			
<b>NEIGHBOURHOOD SITES</b>			
Bill Hawes	Outdoor sports	LQ	HV
Ruby Cook	Parks	HQ	HV
Warren Road Park, Wickersley	Parks	HQ	HV
Barrie Grove, Hellaby	Parks	LQ	HV
Coronation Park	Parks	HQ	HV
<b>LOCAL SITES</b>			
Huntington Way	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Bramley plantation	Amenity green space	HQ	HV
Bramley plantation greens	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Badsworth Place	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Laural Avenue green	Amenity green space	HQ	HV
Bramley Park	Amenity green space	HQ	HV
Fleming Way	Amenity green space	HQ	HV
fleming way	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Addison Road	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Birtley Street green space	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Yarwell Drive, Maltby	Amenity green space	HQ	HV
Davy Drive green space	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Braithwell Road green space	Amenity green space	HQ	HV
Tickhill Road green 2	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Littlewood Way Green Space	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Tickhill Road green 1	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Lumley Close	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Mortimer Road 2	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Somerset Street	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Ascension close	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Addison Road green space	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Upperfield Close	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Victoria Way Wood, Lily Hall	Amenity green space	HQ	HV
Amory's Holt Way green space	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Rosemary Road	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Bramley Grange Crescent	Natural	LQ	LV
Salisbury Road, Maltby	Natural	HQ	HV
Carlyle Road natural site	Natural	LQ	HV
Mortimer Road 1	Natural	LQ	LV
Blyth Road natural site	Natural	HQ	HV
Redwood Drive natural site	Natural	LQ	HV
Hazel Road park, Maltby	Natural	HQ	LV

	<b>TYOPOLOGY</b>	<b>QUALITY</b>	<b>VALUE</b>
Dale Hill Road	Natural	HQ	LV
Brecks Wood	Natural	HQ	HV
Maltby Manor Rec	Outdoor sports	HQ	HV
Highfield Park, Maltby	Parks	LQ	HV
Cherry Tree Park	Parks	LQ	HV
Sorby Way park,Wickersley	Parks	HQ	HV
Flash Lane park	Parks	HQ	HV
<b>ADDED SITES - NOT YET ASSESSED</b>			
Maltby Crags			
Maltby Crags Meadow			
Wood Lee Common			
<b>CEMETERIES</b>			
Maltby Cemetary	Cemeteries	HQ	HV
Church - Wickersley	Cemeteries	HQ	HV
Slacks Lane	Cemeteries	LQ	LV
<b>Rother Valley West</b>			
<b>BOROUGH SITES</b>			
Pit House West (part - remainder in Rother Valley South)	Natural	LQ	HV
<b>NEIGHBOURHOOD SITES</b>			
Ulley Country Park	Natural	HQ	HV
Fairview Drive, Aston	Outdoor sports	LQ	HV
Brinsworth parish fields	Parks	LQ	HV
Alexandra Park Annex	Parks	HQ	LV
Alexandra Park	Parks	LQ	HV
Gordon Bennett park	Parks	HQ	HV
<b>LOCAL SITES</b>			
Fernleigh Drive, Brinsworth	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
The Chase green	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Waleswood View green	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Aughton Lane	Amenity green space	HQ	HV
Lodge Lane	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Florance Avenue	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Catherine Avenue green space	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Bawtry Road green space 3	Amenity green space	HQ	HV
Bawtry Road gren space	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Brinsford Rd green	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Arundel Street green, Treeton	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
War Mamorial Square, Treeton	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Shorland Drive green	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Well Lane green, Treeton	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Orgrave Rd green	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
St Mary's Drive green space,Catcliffe	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Highfield View green	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Gray Avenue	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Mason Avenue green space	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Mason Avenue	Amenity green space	LQ	LV



	<b>TYOLOGY</b>	<b>QUALITY</b>	<b>VALUE</b>
Main Street 2	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Wetherby Drive	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
West Park Drive	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
the Crescent green	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Green Arbour School, Thurcroft	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Kingsforth Lane	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Woodhouse Green	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Treeton Wood	Natural	LQ	HV
Hail Mary Wood & Falconer Wood	Natural	HQ	HV
Treeton Dyke F Masters	Natural	LQ	HV
former Treeton tip	Natural	HQ	HV
Bole Hill Plantation	Natural	LQ	HV
Engine house plantation	Natural	HQ	LV
Worksop Rd natural site	Natural	LQ	LV
Rotherham Road natural space	Natural	HQ	HV
Bawtry Road natural site	Natural	LQ	LV
well lane scrub	Natural	LQ	HV
Rother Cres	Natural	HQ	LV
Catcliffe Flash LNR	Natural	LQ	HV
Nursary Drive	Natural	LQ	HV
steadfolds Lane natural space	Natural	LQ	HV
Zamor Crescent	Natural	LQ	HV
West Lane, Aughton	Outdoor sports	LQ	HV
Burgoyne Park, Aston	Outdoor sports	HQ	HV
Washfield Lane rec	Outdoor sports	LQ	LV
Washfield Sports Ground	Outdoor sports	LQ	LV
Orgreave Rd green 2	Outdoor sports	LQ	LV
Thurcroft Miners' Welfare	Outdoor sports	HQ	HV
Fence Recreation Ground	Parks	LQ	LV
Main St Park, Aughton	Parks	LQ	LV
Well Lane Play Area	Parks	HQ	LV
<b>CEMETERIES</b>			
All Saints	Cemeteries	HQ	LV
Piper Lane	Cemeteries	HQ	LV
Church - Ulley	Cemeteries	HQ	LV
St Helens church	Cemeteries	HQ	LV
St Mary's Church	Cemeteries	HQ	LV
St Georges Churchyard	Cemeteries	LQ	LV
Alexander Road cemetery	Cemeteries	HQ	LV
Aston Park	Natural	LQ	HV
<b>Rother Valley South</b>			
<b>BOROUGH SITES</b>			
Pit House West (part - remainder in Rother Valley West)	Natural	LQ	HV
Rother Valley Park	Parks	HQ	HV
<b>NEIGHBOURHOOD SITES</b>			
Dinnington comp	Outdoor sports	LQ	HV
Dinnington Miner's Welfare	Outdoor sports	LQ	HV
Wales Parish playing fields	Outdoor sports	LQ	HV

	<b>TYOPOLOGY</b>	<b>QUALITY</b>	<b>VALUE</b>
Woodsetts parish field	Outdoor sports	LQ	HV
Greenlands park	Parks	LQ	HV
Spence Field, Harthill	Parks	LQ	HV
<b>LOCAL SITES</b>			
Woodland Drive green space	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
The Rise green	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
The Green 2, North Anston	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Kendal Ave Park	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Westbank Drive green	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Nursery Rd	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
East Street green	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Laughton Road	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Constable Lane green, Dinnington	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
St Leger Avenue Green Space	Amenity green space	LQ	HV
Hatfield Crescent Green Space	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Breck Lane Green	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Manor Lane, Throapham	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Bookers Way	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Park Lane, Dinnington	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Riverside Court, Laughton	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Peregrine Way	Amenity green space	HQ	LV
Hard Lane verge	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
essex Close green	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Wales bar field	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Longlands ave green spaces	Amenity green space	LQ	LV
Old Spring Wood	Natural	HQ	HV
Hawks Wood	Natural	LQ	HV
kilamarsh ponds & Nor Wood	Natural	LQ	HV
Waleswood plantation	Natural	LQ	HV
Dukeries Drive, North Anston	Natural	HQ	HV
Windmill Plantation	Natural	LQ	HV
Brook walk	Natural	HQ	HV
Anston Stones wood	Natural	HQ	HV
Alcove plantation, (Greenlands)	Natural	HQ	HV
Undergate Road Hill, Dinnington	Natural	LQ	HV
Athorpe Road natural area	Natural	LQ	LV
Undertake Road	Natural	LQ	LV
Meadow Street	Natural	LQ	LV
White Quarry plantation	Natural	HQ	LV
Abbey Close	Natural	HQ	LV
Manor lane natural site	Natural	HQ	LV
Dinnington Comp Wood	Natural	LQ	LV
Leicester Road	Natural	LQ	HV
foljambe drive 1	Natural	LQ	LV
Stockwell Ave open space	Natural	LQ	HV
Todwick Plantation	Natural	LQ	HV
Anston Parish field	Outdoor sports	LQ	HV
Firbeck Avenue, Laughton-en-le-Morthern	Outdoor sports	HQ	HV
Dinnington Miners welfare	Outdoor sports	LQ	HV
Winney Hill Park, Harthill	Outdoor sports	HQ	HV
Red Hill rec, Kiveton Park	Outdoor sports	LQ	HV
Wales High school	Outdoor sports	LQ	HV

	<b>TYOLOGY</b>	<b>QUALITY</b>	<b>VALUE</b>
Manor Road, Kiveton Park	Outdoor sports	LQ	HV
Swinston Hill	Outdoor sports	tbc	tbc
Sorby field, Wickersley	Outdoor sports	HQ	LV
Todwick rec	Outdoor sports	LQ	HV
Lockwood Ave play area	Parks	LQ	LV
Anston Parish hall	Parks	HQ	LV
Dinnington Park	Parks	HQ	HV
Coronation Park, Dinnington	Parks	HQ	LV
Hangman Lane park	Parks	HQ	HV
Chestnut Grove Park	Parks	LQ	LV
<b>CEMETERIES</b>			
StJames church	Cemeteries	HQ	LV
South Anston burial ground	Cemeteries	HQ	LV
Constable Lane	Cemeteries	LQ	LV
Park Avenue Cemetery	Cemeteries	HQ	HV
St John's Road	Cemeteries	HQ	LV
All Saints Church	Cemeteries	HQ	LV
Union Street Church	Cemeteries	HQ	LV
Stockwell Lane cemetery	Cemeteries	HQ	LV
StJohn the Baptist	Cemeteries	HQ	LV
St Peters church	Cemeteries	HQ	LV
Todwick Parish Church	Cemeteries	HQ	HV
St Georges	Cemeteries	HQ	LV

## APPENDIX 4 Proposed GreenSpace Quality Standards

### *Proposed standards for image, facilities, activities and information*

Local	Neighbourhood	Borough
Welcoming	Welcoming	Welcoming
Safe and Clean	Safe and Clean	Safe and Clean
Named site, definitive list of green spaces	Named site, definitive list of green spaces	Named site, definitive list of green spaces
mapped location	mapped location	mapped location
	Seating	Seating
	Bins (dog and litter)	Bins (dog and litter)
	Children's play equipment	Children's play equipment
	On-site signage	On-site signage
	Directional off-site signage	Directional off-site signage
	Formal community engagement (e.g. forum/Friends group)	Formal community engagement (e.g. forum/Friends group)
	Suitable/available activities statement	Suitable/available activities statement
	range of facilities/activities (At least 3)	range of facilities/activities (At least 5)
	Events (min 1 per year)	Events (min 3 per year)
		Toilets
		Catering
		Brown off site signage
		Site specific marketing strategy

### *Proposed standards for management and development*

Local	Neighbourhood	Borough
Maintenance statement (with objectives and key processes)	Management Plan (Green Flag standard)	Management Plan (Green Flag standard)
Staff (at least once fortnightly inspection)	Staff (at least once daily inspection)	Staff on site (during opening hours)
	Separate financial accounting	Separate financial accounting
	Development Master plan (10yr review) inc "safer by design" etc	Development Master plan (10yr review) inc "safer by design" etc

***Proposed standards for conservation and biodiversity, landscape and heritage***

<b>Local</b>	<b>Neighbourhood</b>	<b>Borough</b>
Best practice adopted (hedge and tree work timings etc)	Best practice adopted (hedge and tree work timings etc)	Best practice adopted (hedge and tree work timings etc)
	Assessment of biodiversity interest as part of management plan	Assessment of biodiversity interest as part of management plan
	Development master plan to include review & protection of landscape character/heritage etc	Development master plan to include review & protection of landscape character/heritage etc

***Proposed Standards for Access***

<b>Local</b>	<b>Neighbourhood</b>	<b>Borough</b>
Restrict unwanted access	Restrict unwanted access	Restrict unwanted access
DDA compliance where relevant through site development	DDA compliance where relevant through site development	DDA compliance where relevant through site development
	Car park or suitable on street parking	Car park
	Cycle storage	Cycle storage
	Footpath network within site (signed, accessible to most)	Footpath network within site (signed, accessible to most)
		Public transport information on site and directional signs to bus stop etc.
		link to strategic public rights of way network (resting points/start points for long distance routes Joint marketing)