

Natural and semi-natural open space

Introduction and definition

- 5.1 This type of open space includes woodlands, urban forestry, scrubland, grasslands (e.g. downlands, commons, meadows), wetlands, nature reserves and wastelands with a primary purpose of wildlife conservation and biodiversity within the settlement boundaries.
- 5.2 Natural and semi-natural open space can frequently be found within other open space types, and in some instances there may be some sites classified as amenity green space or parks that play a similar role to natural and semi-natural open space sites. This serves to highlight the overlap between typologies.
- 5.3 Although natural and semi-natural open space plays a key role in wildlife conservation and biodiversity, the recreational opportunities provided by these spaces are also important. It is essential that a balance between recreational use, biodiversity and conservation is achieved. The key issues arising from the Phase 1 audits of biodiversity will be returned to later in this section. The diverse nature of both habitats and species evident at natural and semi-natural sites in Hull is clearly evident from these visits.
- 5.4 This section outlines the strategic context and key consultation findings relating to natural and semi-natural open space within Hull and the recommended local standards. These local standards are then applied in order to understand local issues and priorities.

The River Hull



Local context

- 5.5 The key issues for natural and semi-natural open spaces arising from a review of strategic documents are set out overleaf in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 – Strategic context –local

Document Reviewed	Summary of key strategic drivers	Key issues influencing the provision of natural and semi-natural open space
<p>Hull Local Plan (2000)</p>	<p>Chapter four of the local plan considers how to manage the local environment in a sustainable way to improve the quality of life for people and contribute positively to the environment.</p> <p>Policy ME1 states that development that is sustainable and respects environmental constraints will be supported</p> <p>Chapter six of the Local Plan covers the natural environment and identifies the protection and enhancement of the natural environment as a key feature of the City Plan.</p> <p>Policy NE1 protects Urban Greenspace identified on the proposals map (0.25 hectares and above) from development. Development will not be permitted if it results in the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loss of sport and recreation facilities • an adverse effect on nature conservation • loss of links between other areas of Urban Greenspace • an adverse effect on the amenity and character of the area. <p>Policy NE13 protects the Green Network identified on the proposals map from development.</p> <p>Policy NE21 supports the management and enhancement of Urban Greenspace for the benefit of the community and wildlife.</p> <p>Policy BE1 states developments should be acceptable in terms of their relationship to existing natural features and retaining existing Urban Greenspace.</p> <p>Policy BE6 requires developers to provide a good standard of landscape that protects existing natural features.</p>	<p>The plan advocates the protection of natural open space and the natural environment. The protection of the natural environment is a key priority.</p> <p>The plan restricts development that would impact on nature conservation.</p>

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Document Reviewed	Summary of key strategic drivers	Key issues influencing the provision of natural and semi-natural open space
Hull Biodiversity Action Plan	<p>The vision of the action plan is, “<i>to improve the nature conservation interest of the Estuary and its associated habitats</i>”.</p> <p>The vision for gardens and allotments is to share gardens with wildlife and increase the number and variety of creatures that live in gardens.</p> <p>The vision for parks, golf courses and cemeteries is to improve the wildlife-friendly management of parks, golf courses and cemeteries.</p>	The action plan promotes the conservation of natural open spaces and the creation of further habitats and biodiversity.

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- 5.6 These strategic documents reinforce the role of natural and semi-natural open space in the local community and the importance of providing high quality, easily accessible natural and semi-natural open space.

Consultation – Assessing local needs

- 5.7 Consultation undertaken as part of the study highlighted the following key issues relating to natural and semi-natural open space:
- natural and semi-natural open space is one of the most frequently visited open spaces in Hull, with 35% of respondents to the household survey stating they visit this type of open space at least once a month
 - general comments from respondents to the household survey focused on the protection of natural and semi-natural open space. This was further reinforced by attendees at drop in sessions, who indicated that natural open space is particularly important given the urban nature of the city
 - 6% of respondents to the young people’s IT survey stated that an area of woodland would be the new type of open space they would like most, highlighting the value of natural and semi-natural open space to younger residents
 - 37% of respondents to the community network consultation stated that there was insufficient provision of natural and semi-natural open space.

Quantity of existing provision

- 5.8 The provision of natural and semi-natural open space in Hull is summarised in Table 5.2 below. This table excludes the four largest sites, which all exceed 15 ha in size and therefore skew figures. These will be referred to in the text below.

Table 5.2 – Provision of natural and semi-natural open space across Hull

Area	Current provision	Number of sites	Smallest site (hectares)	Largest site (Hectares)	Scenario a Provision per 1000 population (2026)	Scenario b Provision per 1000 population (2026)	Scenario c Provision per 1000 population (2026)
East	12.79	7	0.56	4.73	0.34	0.34	0.33
Northern	11.82	5	0.19	4.14	0.36	0.35	0.34
North Carr	53.08	11	1.73	10.9	1.90	1.87	1.83
Park	13.56	6	0.48	6.27	0.30	0.30	0.29
Riverside	33.95	12	0.65	9.13	0.75	0.73	0.71
West	18.52	9	0.24	4.76	0.51	0.50	0.48
Wyke	5.80	4	1.08	1.97	0.19	0.18	0.18

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Overall	149.53	54	0.19	10.9	0.58	0.57	0.56
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5.9 The key issues emerging from Table 5.2 and consultations relating to the quantity of provision of natural and semi-natural open space across the city include:

- findings from the household survey show that only 31% of the population feel that there are more than enough / about the right amount of semi-natural areas within the city. In contrast, 59% state that provision is insufficient overall. This suggests that there is a desire for more natural and semi-natural open space
- excluding the large sites, the overall provision across the city equates to 149.53 hectares, located at 54 sites. There are a further 99.34 hectares of natural open space at the four largest open space sites across the city
- there are only four natural and semi-natural open spaces within the Wyke area. In contrast, there are 12 sites in the Riverside areas and 11 in North Carr. Furthermore, three additional large sites are located in North Carr
- three of the four sites exceeding 15 ha in size are located in North Carr. The largest of these sites is over 46 ha. The other site exceeding 15 ha is situated in the west of the city
- based on all three growth scenarios, even excluding the three large sites, the greatest provision per 1000 population is found in the North Carr area. It is within this area where the greatest current provision is located, even excluding the three additional sites
- the size of sites ranges significantly from 0.19 hectares (Northern area) to 46.74 hectares (North Carr). There are four sites over 15 ha
- the lowest level of satisfaction is in the Wyke analysis area, where 71% feel that the level of provision is insufficient. Similarly, 69% of residents in the Northern analysis area suggest that there are not enough natural and semi-natural open spaces.
- the low levels of satisfaction in the Wyke and Northern areas are supported by the actual quantity figures, with the current provision of natural and semi-natural open space in these areas being low (5.80 and 11.82 hectares)

Setting provision standards – quantity

5.10 The recommended local quantity standard for natural and semi-natural open space has been derived from the local needs consultation and audit of provision and is summarised overleaf. Full justification for the local standard is provided within Appendix F. The standard is set above the existing level of provision and therefore places an emphasis on increasing both the quantity and quality of sites.

Quantity Standard (see Appendices E and F – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)

Existing level of provision	Recommended standard
0.58 hectares per 1000	0.62 hectares per 1000
Justification	
<p>The value placed on natural and semi-natural open space is clear, both in terms of the recreational resource these spaces offer and also in light of the role that natural areas play in biodiversity and conservation. The overall perception established throughout consultation was that the provision of natural and semi-natural open space in Hull is insufficient to meet local needs. Over half of the respondents to the household survey stated provision was insufficient (59%) and this was supported by the majority of residents in each geographical area.</p> <p>Although both quantitative and qualitative issues were raised throughout consultation, the importance of natural and semi-natural open space in Hull due to the urban nature of the city was frequently discussed and the need to protect this type of open space was regularly identified. In many instances, residents highlighted the importance of ensuring that existing natural open space was accessible to residents.</p> <p>In light of the evident importance of this type of open space to residents, coupled with the high levels of dissatisfaction with the current level of provision, it is recommended that the local standard is set above the existing level of provision. Large sites have been removed from the calculations due to their tendency to skew the overall findings and consequently produce unrealistic expectations of provision.</p> <p>Setting the standard at this level will ensure firstly that existing sites are protected from development and will also facilitate the delivery of more semi-natural areas in areas of deficiency. The standard has been set at a level which will be based on the average size of sites, will be sufficient to meet accessibility deficiencies but will promote increasing access to existing sites in other areas. In many instances, the development of semi-natural areas within wider open spaces may be a key opportunity for the achievement of this standard. The natural garden in East Park was highlighted as being an example of good practice. Although focus should be placed on protecting and increasing provision, enhancements to the quality of existing sites is also important, due to the perceived average quality of natural and semi-natural open space and the poor access to some sites. Maintaining an appropriate balance between recreational access and biodiversity will be central to the achievement of an effective network of natural and semi-natural open space.</p>	

Current provision - quality

- 5.11 The quality of existing natural and semi-natural open space across the city was assessed through site visits and is summarised in Table 5.3 overleaf. Full details of all the scores achieved can be found in Appendix C. Each site was measured against a site assessment matrix (Appendix D).
- 5.12 It is important to note that site assessments are conducted as a snapshot in time and are therefore reflective of the quality of the site on one specific day.
- 5.13 The quality scores are weighted according to the findings of the local consultation. Those elements that were highlighted through consultation as being particularly important determinants of quality have been weighted higher to ensure that they have a greater influence on the overall quality score achieved.
- 5.14 In particular, the quality and variety of the vegetation was perceived to be particularly important for natural and semi-natural open spaces. This weighting approach is particularly important for natural and semi-natural open space, where lower level

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maintenance may be expected in order to maintain the natural characteristics of sites. The full rationale behind this approach is set out in Appendix G.

Table 5.3 – Quality of natural and semi-natural open space across Hull

Area	Range of quality Scores (%)	Average quality scores (%)	Lowest quality sites	Highest quality sites
East	64-88	78	Land east of Princess Royal Hospital	Land north of Neasden Primary School
Northern	67-100	80.5	Land South of Oak Playing Fields	Land South of Sutton Road
North Carr	58-98	77	Noddle Hill Community Woodland	Land East of Ennerdale Link Road
Park	36-100	71	Land south of Preston Road	Land south of Bilsdale Grove
Riverside	40-70	52	Amy Johnson School	Land East of KC Stadium
West	42-80	54	Smith and Nephew Playing Field	Plantation East of Priory Way
Wyke	66-69	67	Goddard Avenue	Land rear of Huntley Drive
Overall	36–100	66		

5.15 The key issues emerging from Table 5.3 and the consultation relating to the quality of natural and semi-natural open space include:

- 25% of respondents to the household survey felt that the quality of sites was good, while 47% perceived the quality of these open spaces to be average. In contrast 28% felt that the quality of sites was poor. This suggests that there is an overall split in opinion
- the average score awarded during site assessments was 66% which suggests that overall the quality of sites is reasonable. This is however misleading, as this disguises significant variation in scores achieved. Overall, scores ranged from 36% to 100% indicating a significant variation in quality. This reflects the split in opinion evident across the city and may also reflect the balance between recreational value and conservation value
- the quality ratings given by residents were similar across all areas, with the modal response being that the quality of provision was average. The most satisfied residents were those in the Riverside area where 34% felt that the quality of the sites were good

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- while perceptions were similar across the city, site assessments indicate that the quality of sites differs across the city. Surprisingly, despite positive comments from residents in the Riverside area, the lowest sites are located within this area with an average site assessment score of only 52%. The quality of natural and semi-natural open spaces was much higher in the East and Northern areas of the city, with the average score being over 80% in both areas
 - drop-in session responses relating to this typology focused more on quantitative issues, however, residents showed an overall satisfaction with the quality of the natural and semi-natural areas within Hull. Many residents recognised their aesthetic and recreational value, and the natural garden in East Park was highlighted as a good quality natural open space.
- 5.16 70 natural and semi-natural open spaces (some of which fall under the categorisation of linear green corridors in this report and are also therefore referenced in the green corridors section) were visited as part of the Phase 1 Biodiversity Audits. 27 sites falling into other typologies were also visited, demonstrating that a high proportion of sites in Hull have a secondary natural and semi-natural open space function. Visits highlighted a variety of habitats and species and concluded that:
- just over 50% of the sites were rated as either high or very high in terms of diversity. Linear routes demonstrated particular diversity
 - eleven sites in total contained habitats that are referenced in the UK Biodiversity plan while 52 sites exhibited species that are outlined within the UK Plan. This highlights the importance of these sites in the provision of habitats in Hull
 - over 50% of sites contained species that are referenced within the Hull Biodiversity Plan and almost all sites contained habitats referenced in the Hull Plan
 - the sites considered to be high or very high in terms of diversity were: Noddle Hill Way Community Woodland, Bransholme Fishing Lakes, Strip of Land off Oldfleet Primary School, Former Withernsea Railway Line, Holderness Drain, Land to South of Westwood Close, Dismantled Railway Line between Sutton Road and Chamberlain Road, Land East of Falkland Road, Dismantled Railway West of Dansom Lane, Land South of Bilsdale Grove – The Lozenge, Foredyke Stream East, Strip running West of Holwell Road, Land South of Withernsea Railway Line, Land East of Cumbrian Way, Land to junction of Bude Road and Wade Road, Foredyke Stream West, Land to North of The Croft, Ennerdale, Poplar Plantation, Yorkshire Balancing Wayer Reservoir, Land to South of Oak Playing Fields, Rockford Fields, Foredyke Street Cycle Track north of Chamberlain Road, Land East of Bournemouth Street, Land South of Sculcoates Lane and West of Air Street, Beverley and Barmston Drain, Mudflats, Dismantled Railway Sidings East of Calvert Lane, Dismantled Railway west of Calvert Lane, Land to East of Circle Cricket Ground, Priory Cycle Track, Lane to West of Ella St, Lane to Rear of Huntley Drive, Land to rear of Cropton Road, Public footpath to West of National Avenue, Foredyke Stream Cycle Track and The River Hull.

Setting provision standards – quality

- 5.17 The recommended local quality standard for natural and semi-natural open space is summarised below. This standard sets out the essential elements of a high quality natural open space in terms of recreational provision. These findings are derived from the key themes of local consultations. Full justification and consultation relating to the quality of provision is provided within Appendix G.

Quality standard (see Appendix G)

Recommended standard – NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL OPEN SPACE		
Local consultation, national guidance and best practice suggest that the following features are essential and desirable to local residents:		
Essential	Desirable	
Clean/litter free	Footpaths	
Nature features	Good site access	
Flowers and trees	Dog walking facilities	
Detailed analysis of the local consultation suggests that with regards to natural and semi-natural areas, the relative importance of the key components is as follows:		
Component of quality	Proportion of possible total responses received	Weighting
Security and Safety	20%	2
Cleanliness and maintenance	27%	3
Vegetation	38%	4
Ancillary accommodation	17%	1

- 5.18 When opening up access to natural and semi-natural open spaces and improving their quality in terms of the visitor experience, it is also essential to consider the role of the site in terms of the provision of habitats and the species that live in the site. It is important to ensure that changes are not detrimental to the diversity of the site.

Setting provision standards – accessibility

- 5.19 The local accessibility standard is set in the form of a distance threshold and is derived directly from the findings of the local consultations. It considers the distance that residents are willing to travel to access different types of facilities as well as the mode of transport that they would anticipate using.
- 5.20 Findings from the household survey reveal that 84% of current users walk to access this typology, indicating natural and semi-natural open space is expected to be in close proximity to the home. This is perhaps surprising in light of the urban nature of the city.
- 5.21 However, responses regarding preferred/expected methods of travel to natural and semi-natural open spaces are split between walking (40%) and travelling by car (35%). This suggests that while the most frequent users of natural open space are those who have such a site local to them, other residents are prepared to travel.

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- 5.22 Site specific accessibility issues were also analysed as part of the programme of site visits where information and signage, transport and general accessibility issues were assessed. Where access to specific sites is limited, this will impact on usage of the site. Access to natural and semi-natural sites is a particular issue in Hull, with many currently offering limited access for the general public.
- 5.23 Site assessments reveal that access to natural and semi-natural open space is varying, with assessment scores ranging from 40% to 80%. Several natural and semi-natural open spaces were perceived to be remote and not easily identifiable to residents. In contrast, several sites were considered to have good paths and easily identifiable boundaries.
- 5.24 The recommended local accessibility standard for natural and semi-natural open space is summarised below. Full justification for the local standard is provided within Appendix H. In light of the emphasis on localised provision and the current patterns of travel, the standard promotes local provision of natural and semi-natural open space. Standards set by Natural England suggest that all residents should be within 300m of a natural open space. While the nature of Hull restricts opportunities to achieve this and the standard has therefore been set above this level, the recommended accessibility standard should be considered as a minimum level of provision.

Accessibility standard (see Appendix H)

Recommended standard
20 MINUTE WALK TIME
Justification
<p>Local consultation clearly indicates the majority of current users walk to this typology (84%). 40% of respondents also expect to walk to natural and semi-natural open space while the remainder would drive or use public transport / cycle. To encompass all of these requirements and promote increased usage of natural and semi-natural open space, it is recommended that a walk time is set across the city. It is also important to enhance access to areas of nearby countryside, particularly in light of the challenges of providing new natural and semi-natural open space within a city environment. The range of responses varies significantly, with residents expecting to travel between 1 and 90 minutes on foot. The second quartile figure is 10 minutes, while the third quartile figure is 20 minutes. The mean response is 15 minutes. Expectations are not consistent across the city, with residents in three areas having lower expectations with regards travel distance to natural and semi-natural open space.</p> <p>While analysis demonstrates that many residents expect to have access to local natural space, particularly those who currently use this type of space, other consultations indicate that quality of sites and lack of awareness is as significant with regards these sites as local access. Furthermore, there are other components of access to natural and semi-natural open space which require improvement, including signage. In light of the challenges of creating new semi-natural open spaces in an urban environment, and the myriad of issues surrounding these sites, a standard of a 20 minute walk time is recommended.</p> <p>The application of this standard will need to be considered in the clear context of the wider value and role of natural and semi-natural open space sites. While access to the public is important, in some instances public access can conflict with the biodiversity and habitat benefits that these sites offer. This should be a particularly important consideration during the application of standards phase and is further justification for the higher standard, as it is imperative to ensure that the conflict between recreation and biodiversity is minimised.</p>

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5.25 The application of this standard will need to be considered in the clear context of the wider value and role of natural and semi-natural open space sites. While access to the public is important, in some instances public access can conflict with the biodiversity and habitat benefits that these sites offer. This should be a particularly important consideration during the application of standards phase.

Applying provision standards

5.26 The application of the recommended quality, quantity and accessibility standards is essential to understand the existing distribution of open space, sport and recreation facilities and identify areas where provision is insufficient to meet local need.

5.27 The quantity standards enable the identification of areas that do not meet the minimum provision standards, while the accessibility standards will help determine where those deficiencies are of high importance. Applying the standards together is a much more meaningful method of analysis than applying the standards separately.

5.28 The application of the local standard for quantity is set out in Table 5.4 below. It must be noted that these figures exclude sites excluded from the quantity standards (three of which are in North Carr).

Table 5.4 – Application of quantity standard

Area	Current balanced against local standard (0.64 hectares per 1000 population)	Future balanced against local standard Scenario a (0.64 hectares per 1000 population)	Future balanced against local standard Scenario b (0.64 hectares per 1000 population)	Future balanced against local standard Scenario c (0.64 hectares per 1000 population)
East	-10.44	-10.16	-10.86	-11.49
Northern	-8.65	-8.41	-9.01	-9.56
North Carr	35.77	35.96	35.49	35.07
Park	-14.19	-13.86	-14.70	-15.45
Riverside	5.72	6.06	5.22	4.46
West	-4.18	-3.91	-4.57	-5.16
Wyke	-13.37	-13.15	-13.71	-14.22
Overall	-9.32	-7.46	-12.11	-16.33

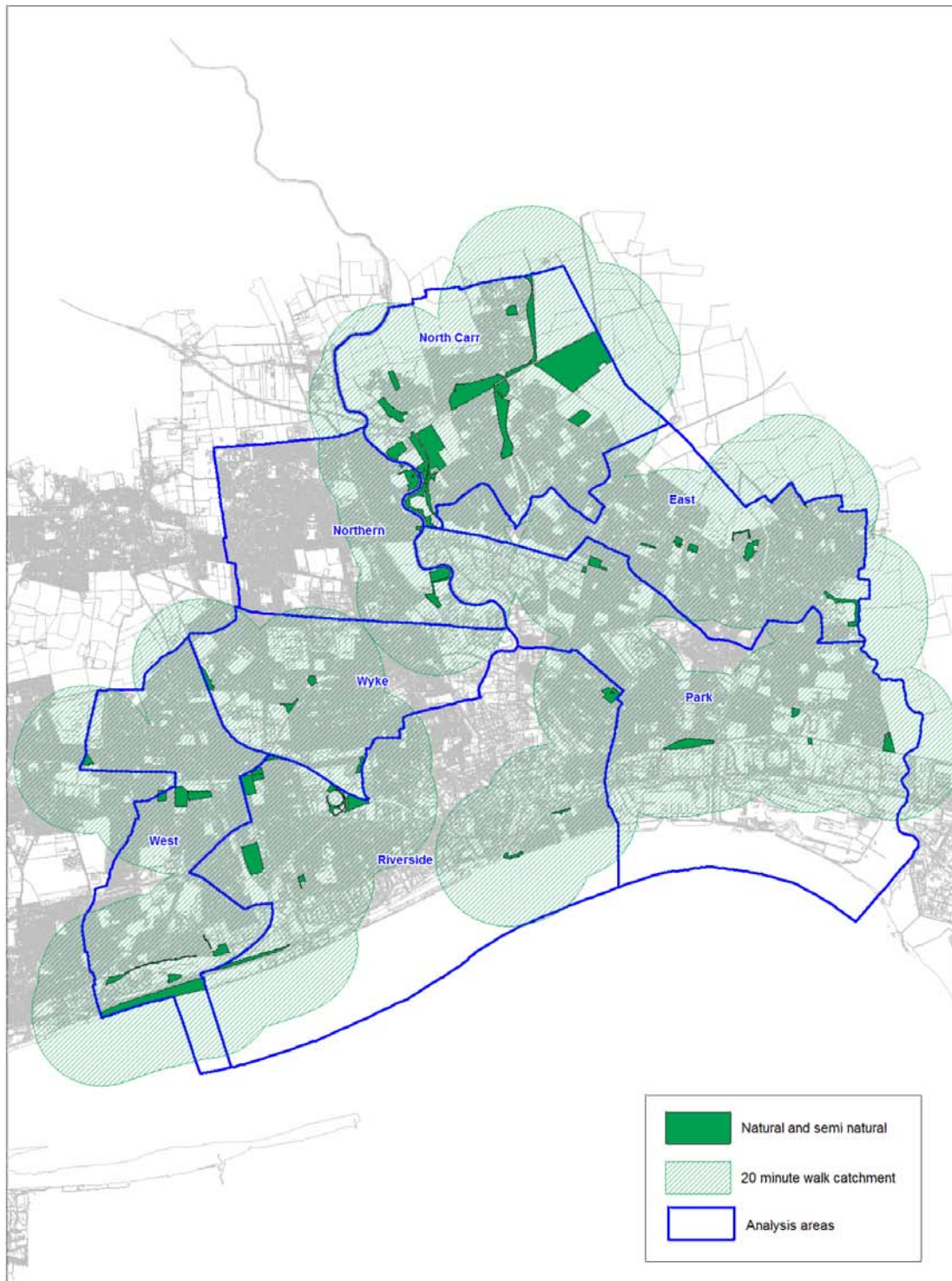
5.29 The application of standards results in the following issues:

- based on the application of the quantity standards there is insufficient provision of natural and semi-natural open space in the city to meet current and future demand, with a shortfall of 12.11 hectares expected by 2026 (Scenario b). The current shortfall equates to 9.32 hectares

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- only in the North Carr and Riverside Areas is the quantity of this type of open space sufficient to meet current and future demand
 - when considering provision in the West area, if the large site which is excluded from calculations is taken into account, provision would also exceed the minimum standard in this area
 - the greatest current and future deficiency is portrayed in the Park area with a shortfall of 15.45 hectares expected by 2026 if the highest growth scenario (Scenario c) were to occur.
- 5.30 The application of the local accessibility standards for natural and semi-natural open space is set out in Map 5.1 overleaf. As highlighted previously, it should be noted that the 20 minute catchment area should represent a minimum standard. Where possible, this type of open space should be provided within closer proximity of the home, to maximise accessibility for all sectors of the community.
- 5.31 All sites including those excluded from quantity calculations are illustrated in Map 5.1 overleaf.

Map 5.1 - Provision of natural and semi-natural open space in Hull



Natural and semi natural

Based upon the Ordnance Survey with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Officer
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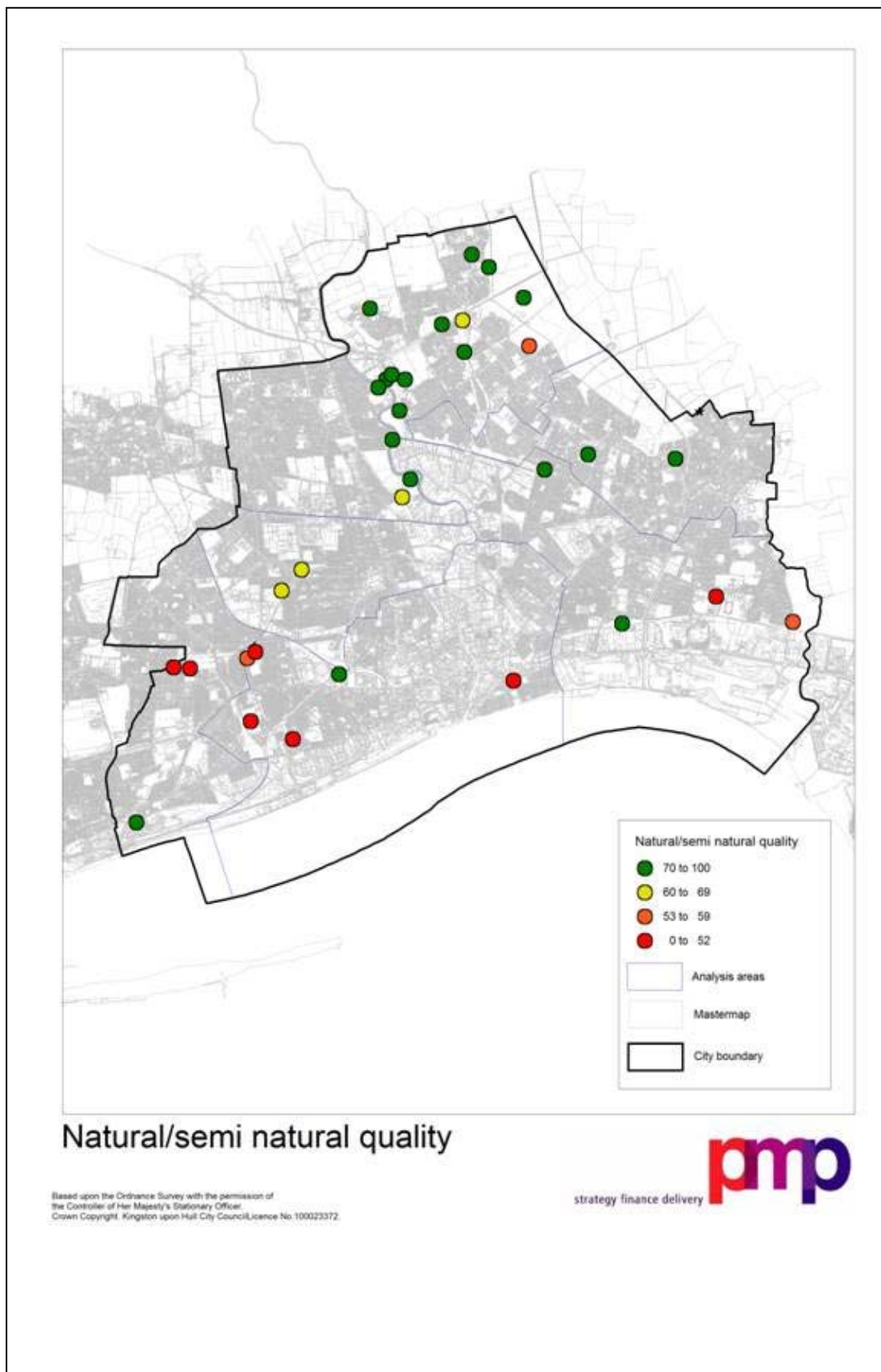
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- 5.32 Map 5.1 indicates that although the distribution of natural and semi-natural open space is even, there are a number of areas deficient in the provision of natural and semi-natural open space. Key areas of deficiency are evident in the north of the Northern areas and in the north east of the Riverside area. However, the majority of residents in the West, Park and North Carr areas have access to a minimum of one natural or semi-natural open space.
- 5.33 In order to maximise the recreational benefits derived from natural and semi-natural open spaces, it is essential to ensure that there is adequate access. Site visits highlight that signage to natural sites is particularly poor and awareness of opportunities is particularly low across Hull. Additionally, access to privately-owned natural and semi-natural open spaces is frequently limited. Increasing access to existing natural open spaces will be important if residents' satisfaction with the quantity of natural open space in the city is to improve. As well as access to natural and semi-natural open space, consultation highlighted that access to the countryside surrounding the city is also limited.

NSN1	<p>Maximise access to natural and semi-natural open space sites by ensuring that entrances to sites are visible and that appropriate signage is provided.</p> <p>Promote awareness of natural and semi-natural open spaces and the benefits that they offer within the local community.</p>
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- 5.34 The accessibility issues and desire to promote usage of natural and semi-natural open space reinforces the importance of an effective green infrastructure and links between different types of open space. The urban nature of Hull means that access to natural and semi-natural open spaces is more restricted than in other areas.
- 5.35 Site assessments revealed that the quality of natural and semi-natural open space in the city varies significantly. While there are some excellent sites, there are several opportunities for enhancement, particularly in the Riverside, Park and West areas.
- 5.36 Map 5.2 overleaf illustrates the quality of natural and semi-natural open spaces from a recreational perspective. There are several opportunities across the city to enhance the quality of natural and semi-natural sites and to ensure that residents have access to high quality natural areas.

Map 5.2 – Quality of natural and semi-natural open space in Hull



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- 5.37 From a recreational perspective, while it is not expected that sites will be managed in the same way as parks/amenity green spaces, they should be inviting and controlled. The key aspirations for natural and semi-natural open spaces identified by residents included a clean and litter free site, good footpaths and nature features. To improve the quality of existing sites in the city, these features should be enhanced. The key issues arising from site visits included that many sites were overgrown (although it must be acknowledged that this is sometimes positive from a wildlife perspective) and there were issues with litter.

NSN2

Identify opportunities for improving the quality of natural and semi-natural open spaces. Enhancements should be informed by the quality vision and site assessment quality scores. Sites require an overall score of 79% or above to fall within the top quartile – the benchmark for quality.

- 5.38 While enhancement of sites for recreational purposes is important, consideration should also be given to the ecological and conservation opportunities provided and the habitats that these sites can create. As consultation highlights, natural and semi-natural open spaces are amongst the most popular of all the open spaces in the city. It is therefore important to ensure that promotion of recreational opportunities on site is balanced with the wider functions of the site and that recreation and wildlife uses are in equilibrium. This will require careful management and maintenance.
- 5.39 The Phase 1 habitat surveys emphasise the importance of active conservation management of sites in order to maintain the current habitats and species and improve these where possible. It is stressed that without this, habitats will decrease in size due to other species encroaching. Several sites are prioritised for active conservation management. These are summarised in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5 – Priority Public Sites for Active Conservation Management

Site Code	Site Name	Recommended Management Activities	Recommended Further Survey Work
NE42	Dismantled railway junction east of Calvert Lane	Grassland management, scrub management, pond restoration	Terrestrial invertebrate survey, reptile survey
NE43	Dismantled railway junction west of Calvert Lane	Grassland management, scrub management, pond restoration	Terrestrial invertebrate survey, reptile survey
NE168	River Hull	Grassland management, riparian woodland planting	Water vole survey
NE169	Beverley and Barmston drain	Grassland management	Water vole survey
NE182	Rockford Fields	Grassland management	None
NE212	Land east of Cumbrian Way	Grassland management, woodland / scrub management to increase light levels reaching the main drain	Water vole survey
NE298	Land to the south of Westwood Close	Grassland management, hedgerow management	None
NE316	Holderness Drain	Grassland management	Water vole survey
NE322	Land south of former Withernsea railway line	Grassland management	Terrestrial invertebrate survey, reptile survey
NE1012	Bransholme fishing lakes and associated land	Grassland management, desilting of ponds	Amphibian survey, reptile survey, bird survey

5.40 There is also evidence of invasive species at some natural and semi-natural open spaces. Removal of this should be prioritised.

NSN3	Maximise biodiversity on natural and semi-natural open spaces through the implementation of effective management and maintenance regimes. This might include active conservation management and the preparation of management plans for each site as well as the removal of invasive species.
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5.41 As highlighted previously in this section, it is important to balance the sympathetic management of sites for nature conservation purposes (NSN 3) with improvements to promote recreational uses of sites (NSN 2). The impact of recreational use on biodiversity and habitats should be evaluated.

5.42 At present Hull does not have any Local Nature Reserves (LNRs). Natural England's recommendation in 1996 was that LNRs should be provided at a level of 1 ha per

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thousand population. While these standards are high and relatively unachievable in Hull, there is clearly a shortfall of LNR provision in the city.

5.43 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are for both people and wildlife. They are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally. They offer people special opportunities to study or learn about nature or simply to enjoy it and the creation of one or more LNRs would therefore support the aim of providing natural open spaces which meet the needs of both people and wildlife.

5.44 Natural England recommends that LNRs should be:

- normally greater than 2 ha in size,
- capable of being managed with the conservation of nature and/or the maintenance of special opportunities for study, research or enjoyment of nature as the priority concern.

5.45 LNRs should also be either:

- of high natural interest in the local context or
- of some reasonable natural interest and of high value in the local context for formal education or research or
- of some reasonable natural interest and of high value in the local context for the informal enjoyment of nature by the public.

5.46 To this end, however, a number of SNCI are suitable for LNR status specifically:

- NE1012 'Bransholme Fishing Lakes and Associated Land';
- NE182 Rockford Fields; and
- NE42 & NE43 Calvert Sidings

5.47 Bransholme Fishing Lakes and Rockford Fields are ideal as LNR; both are considered 'ecologically excellent' in the city, supporting many UKBAP and LBAP priorities, they have good existing access within the site and have excellent green links enabling people to reach the sites easily.

5.48 The Calvert Sidings are 'ecologically outstanding' within the city, supporting several UKBAP and LBAP priorities and many rare species. An added dimension to these sites is their strong links to the city's industrial past, which may help public engagement with the site (providing adequate information is available).

NSN4

Investigate the potential to designate one or more Local Nature Reserves within Hull.

5.49 Application of the quantity standard revealed that there is insufficient provision to meet current and future demand in five of the seven areas. North Carr and the Riverside Areas are the only parts of the city to have adequate provision to meet local standards both currently and in the event of future population growth. When taking into account the large site in the west of the city (excluded from standards due to its size), provision in this area would also exceed minimum standards.

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- 5.50 In consideration of the shortfall of natural and semi-natural open space across the city and the nature conservation value of many sites all existing natural and semi-natural open spaces should be protected from development through appropriate policies in the HDF.
- 5.51 In addition to protecting natural open space from development, the local standard places an emphasis on increased provision. Natural and semi-natural open space can frequently be found within sites of other typologies. Allotments and cemeteries can be particular havens for wildlife as highlighted by the Phase 1 habitat assessments.

NSN5

Protect all existing natural and semi-natural open space from development through appropriate policies in the HDF. Facilitate the delivery of further semi-natural open space across the city. This may include providing semi-natural open space within larger sites. New developments should also be required to contribute towards the provision of natural and semi-natural open space.

- 5.52 Natural and semi-natural open space is more difficult to create than other types of open space and to an extent occurs naturally. Where natural open space is not present, alternative solutions will be required. From a recreational point of view, consideration should therefore be given to the most appropriate means of providing residents with access to recreational open space in areas of deficiency. This may include the provision of natural open space within larger sites. The natural gardens at East Park and Pearson Park were frequently commended during consultation and the value of these sites with regards diversity is also evident.
- 5.53 Development of the River Hull Corridor, running from north to south in the city and promotion of this area as a recreational route would increase the level of natural and semi-natural open space across the city and provide a sustainable access route through the city area. This should be considered in addition to area specific actions that follow. The River Hull is already a particularly valuable site in terms of biodiversity and the provision of habitats.

NSN6

Maximise the role of the River Hull corridor in the city, both as a recreational resource and also as a source of habitat creation.

- 5.54 While the previous issues relate to natural and semi-natural open space in all areas of the city, consideration has therefore been given to the key issues relating to the provision of natural and semi-natural open space in each area. These are outlined in the sections that follow.

East area

- 5.55 Application of the quantity standards indicates that there is insufficient provision to meet current and future demand. Based on growth scenario b, there will be a shortfall of 10.44 hectares by 2026. This is representative of the lower number of natural and semi-natural open spaces within the East area.
- 5.56 Despite the large quantitative shortfall in this area of the city, accessibility mapping illustrates that sites are evenly distributed and there are few deficiencies. Furthermore, residents to the east of Hull are in close proximity to the countryside of East Riding.

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- 5.57 Given the even distribution of existing sites, maintaining and improving the quality of sites should be considered the short term priority in the East area. Site assessments indicated that the quality of provision in the East area is the highest across the city. Quality in terms of both recreation and biodiversity should be considered.
- 5.58 In consideration however of the large quantitative shortfall of natural and semi-natural open space, in the longer term, the development of a new semi-natural open space should also be encouraged. This could be achieved through the provision of a semi-natural area within an existing open space, such as a park. Alderman Kneeshaw Recreation Ground is one of the largest sites in the area and could be considered as a potential location for a new semi-natural open space. This site is already perceived to be of high value in terms of the habitats and species it offers. Alternatively, the development and enhancement of existing and new green corridors to link residents to the nearby countryside could be considered.

NSN7	<p>In the short term, maintain and improve the quality of existing sites in the East area.</p> <p>Longer term, consider the provision of a new semi-natural open space within the East area. This could be achieved through the provision of a natural open space within an existing open space, such as a park.</p>
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Northern area

- 5.59 Accessibility mapping illustrates a number of deficiencies in the Northern area with the majority of residents in the Orchard Park and Greenwood and the University wards unable to access a natural or semi-natural open space within the recommended accessibility catchment (Figures 5.1 and 5.2). Access to natural and semi-natural open space is more limited in the Northern area than in any other area. Despite this, people in the Northern area do reside near to the countryside around Cottingham and Woodmansey. In contrast to those in the University and Orchard Park and Greenwood wards, most residents of Beverley ward have good access to natural and semi-natural open space. It must be noted however that although residents in north Beverley ward appear to have good access, the River Hull corridor acts as a natural barrier and although they are within 960m of a site as the crow flies, in reality they would not be able to access this site. This reinforces the need / opportunities to develop the River Hull Corridor for recreational use.
- 5.60 Application of the quantity standard reinforces deficiencies in this area with the provision of natural and semi-natural open space insufficient to meet both current and future demand.

Figure 5.1 – Deficiencies of natural and semi-natural open space in the Orchard Park and Greenwood ward

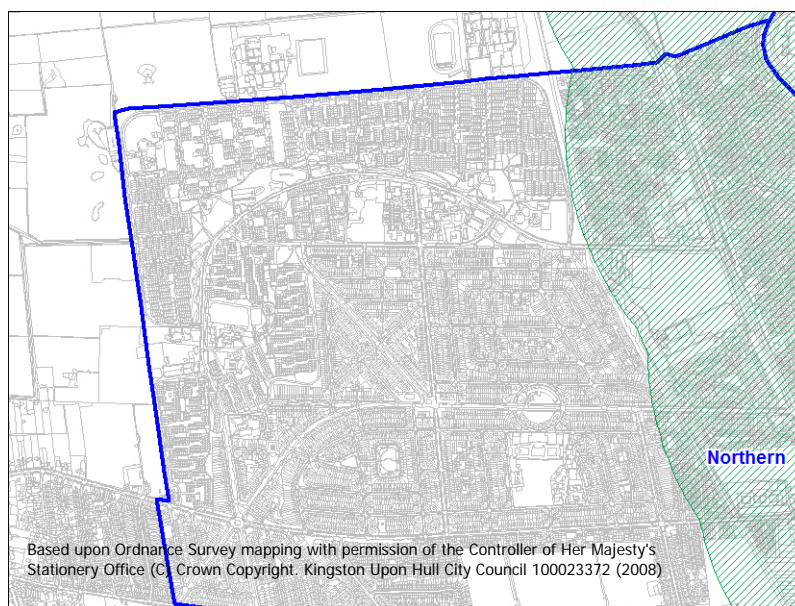
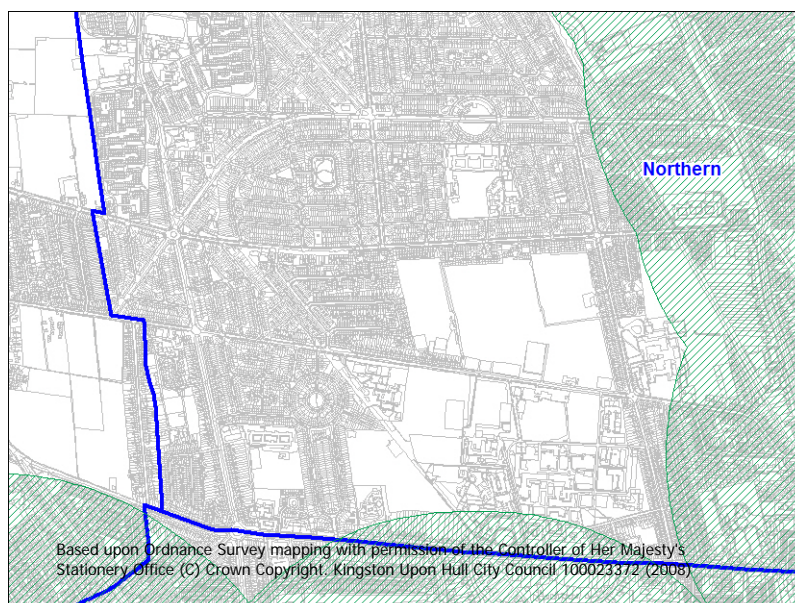


Figure 5.2 – Deficiencies of natural and semi-natural open space in the University ward



5.61 Although residents in the Northern area are in relatively close proximity to nearby countryside, the deficiencies in the Orchard Park and Greenwood ward are further exaggerated by the fact that this ward is the third most deprived in Hull and 80th most deprived nationally. Access to informal recreation opportunities will therefore be particularly important as residents are less likely to have the means to travel. There

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are an abundance of playing fields (both inside the city boundaries and just outside) and several amenity spaces in the area.

- 5.62 Due to the location of the University of Hull's grounds and outdoor sports facilities in the University ward, there is little opportunity for the provision of a new semi-natural open space within this area of the city. The Northern Cemetery, which is located in close proximity, provides a haven for wildlife; however there are few recreational opportunities for residents. This raises the importance of promoting access to areas of nearby countryside.
- 5.63 The lack of natural and semi-natural open spaces in the Northern area of the city places greater emphasis on the quality of sites in the area. The quality of sites is currently higher than the majority of areas of the city, and maintaining this level of quality, while identifying opportunities for the provision of additional semi-natural areas is important.

NSN8	<p>Maintain the quality of existing natural and semi-natural open spaces in Northern area.</p> <p>Identify opportunities to provide a new natural or semi-natural open space within the Orchard Park and Greenwood and University wards and north of Beverley ward. Consider the provision of semi-natural open space within existing open spaces and develop and promote links to the nearby countryside.</p>
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North Carr area

- 5.64 The highest level of natural and semi-natural open space is located in the North Carr area and application of the quantity standard reveals there is sufficient provision to meet current and future demand. In addition, there are three sites exceeding 15 ha (which are excluded from the quantity standard), in this area.
- 5.65 Accessibility mapping reinforces this adequate level of provision, with all residents in the area able to access a natural or semi-natural open space within the recommended 20 minute walk time. Map 5.1 clearly illustrates that the North Carr area contains an abundance of natural and semi-natural open spaces in comparison to other areas in the city. There is only a small group of residents outside of the catchment area for natural and semi-natural open space and these residents live in close proximity to a recreation ground.
- 5.66 Given the even distribution of sites and substantial quantity of provision, maintaining and enhancing the quality of sites should be prioritised over new provision in this area. Quality in terms of both recreation and biodiversity should be considered.
- 5.67 The average quality of the sites in North Carr area was 77%. This suggests that sites are of a much higher quality than other areas of the City. Land North of the Croft, Ennerdale (Thomas Clarkson Way East), next to the River Hull, was identified as being a high quality site with significant potential for further development and improvement. The Bransholme Fishing Lakes were also highlighted as an opportunity for the creation of a Local Nature Reserve.

NSN9	<p>Seek to implement the recommended quality vision at all sites within the North Carr area and target improvements at sites where quality does not reach this level.</p> <p>Investigate opportunities to further enhance the quality of the site around Land North of the Croft, Ennerdale (Thomas Clarkson Way East) and the River Hull.</p>
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Park area

5.68 Application of the quantity standards indicates that there is insufficient provision to meet current and future demand. Based on scenario c there will be an expected shortfall of 15.45 hectares by 2026. In contrast, application of the accessibility standard suggests that there is a reasonable distribution across the Park area. Residents in the north of the Southcoates East ward do however fall outside of the appropriate catchment for natural and semi-natural open space (Figure 5.3). Additionally, residents in the far west of the Holderness ward are also deficient in natural and semi-natural open space. Although it appears that they are within the appropriate catchment of natural open space, in reality, this site is located on the other side of the river and would therefore not be accessible to these residents (Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.3 – Deficiencies of natural and semi-natural open space in the north of Southcoates East ward

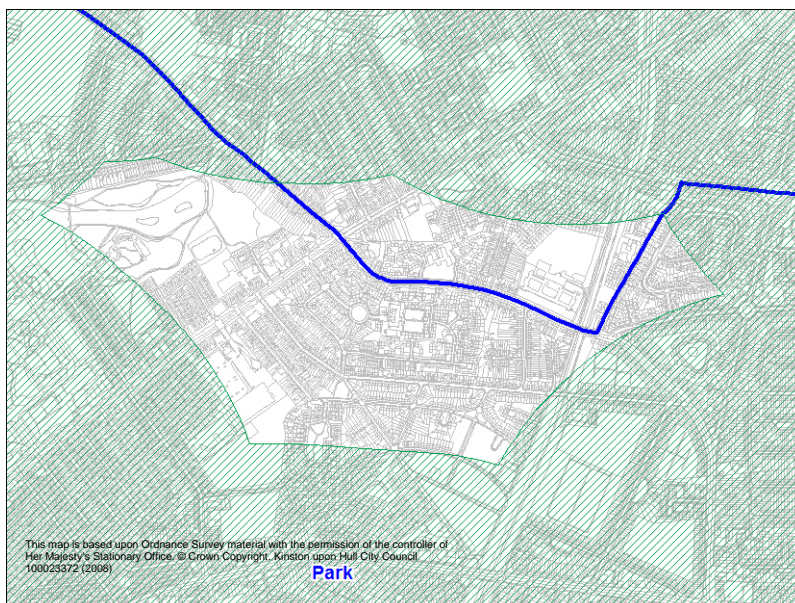
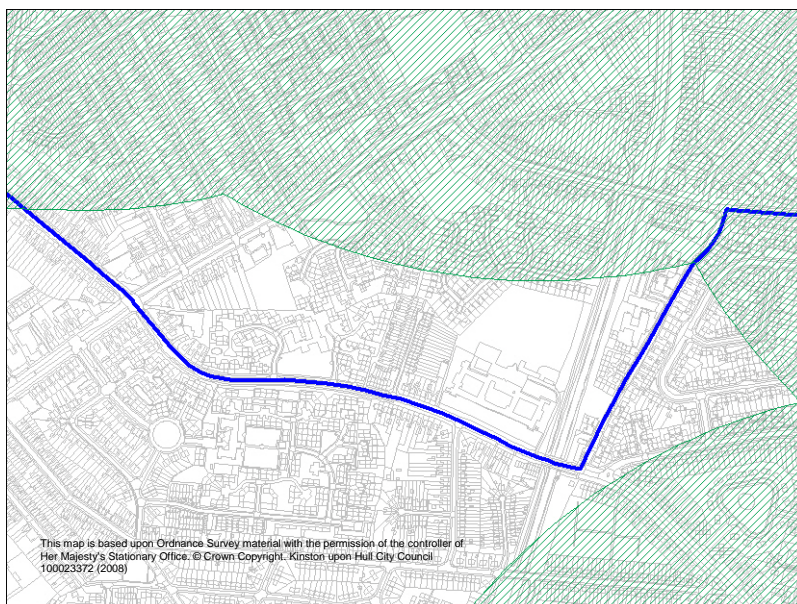


Figure 5.4 – Deficiencies of natural and semi-natural open space in the west of Holderness ward



- 5.69 The provision of amenity green space in the Park area is also insufficient to meet demand and some residents with limited access to natural open space also have no access to amenity space. However, despite a shortfall of natural and semi-natural open space and amenity green space the Park area contains an abundance of parks.
- 5.70 East Park is located within this area and more importantly the park is located within a 20 minute catchment of residents in the area of deficiency. This park is the largest in the Hull (48 hectares) and provides many recreational opportunities to local residents. In addition, it contains a lake and natural area, which to an extent fulfils the role of natural and semi-natural open space.
- 5.71 Given that residents in the remainder of the Park area have good access to natural and semi-natural open space, the quality of provision takes on greater importance. The quality of existing natural open space within the Park area is poorer than many other areas of the city and site assessment scores range from 36–100%. This suggests that there are many opportunities for improvement.
- 5.72 In the short term, improving and maintaining existing natural open spaces should take priority. Longer term, quantitative shortfalls in provision indicate that new provision may be required. In particular, new provision may be required in the Holderness ward.

NSN10	<p>Improve the quality of natural and semi-natural open space within the Park area, using the findings of the site assessment as a guide.</p> <p>Longer term, the provision of new natural and semi-natural open spaces should be encouraged.</p>
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Riverside area

- 5.73 Application of the quantity standard reveals that there is sufficient provision to meet current demand and future demand.
- 5.74 Despite the higher levels of provision than many other areas of the city, accessibility mapping suggests that there are pockets of deficiency, particularly in the north of the Drypool ward and in the Myton ward (figures 5.5 and 5.6).

Figure 5.5 – Deficiencies of natural and semi-natural open space in the north of Drypool ward

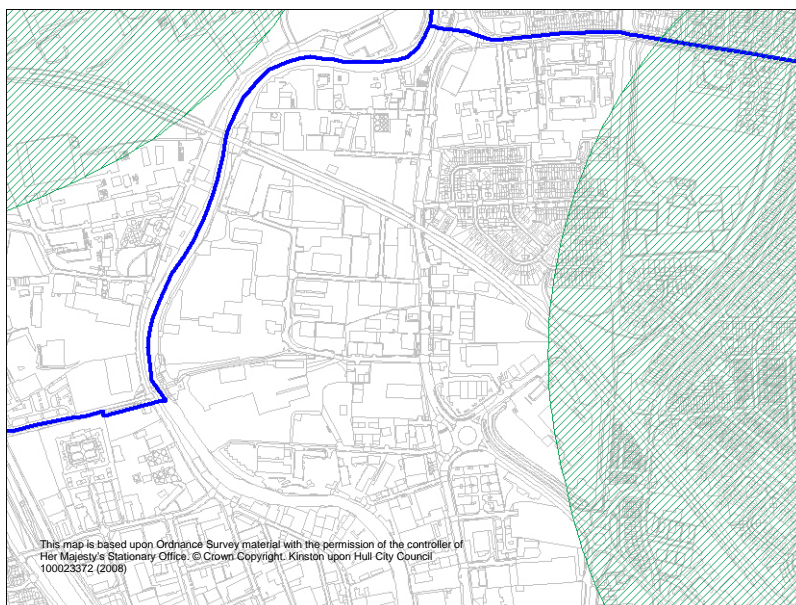
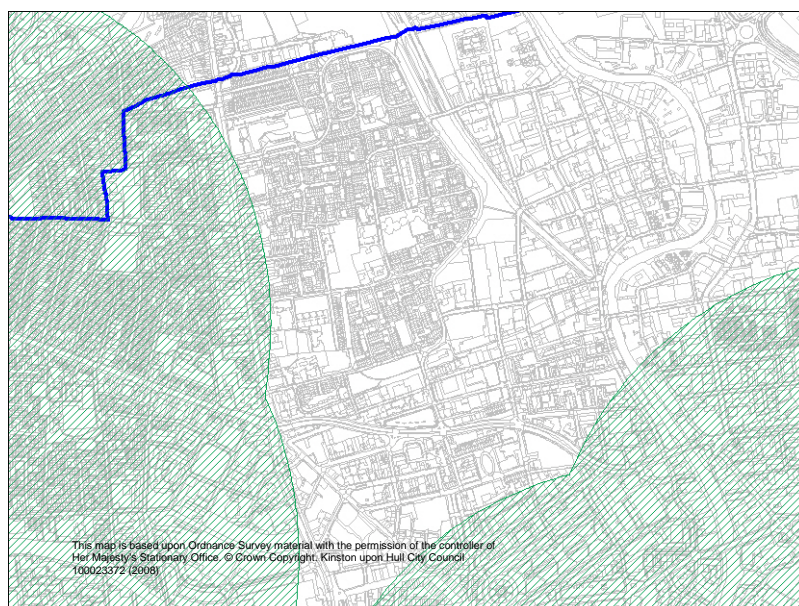


Figure 5.6 – Deficiencies of natural and semi-natural open space in the Myton ward



- 5.75 Although it can be seen that these are significant geographical areas where access to natural and semi-natural open space is limited, it is clear that much of this area is the city centre (where provision would not be expected) and industrial areas. To the

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east of the area of deficiency, while residents are outside of the catchment for a natural and semi-natural open space, they are able to access East Park, where there is a small natural area. Access to natural and semi-natural open space in these areas is therefore not a priority.

- 5.76 It will be essential that regeneration programmes in the Newington and St Andrews areas of the city incorporate natural and semi-natural open space within the design of the new environment to ensure that access to natural and semi-natural open space is maintained and improved where possible.
- 5.77 The quality of natural and semi-natural open space within the Riverside area is poorest of all areas, with an average score of only 52%. In light of the overall quantity of natural and semi-natural open space in the area and the nature of the geographical areas where shortfalls are evident, improvements to the quality should be prioritised in the short term.

NSN11	<p>Seek to implement the recommended quality vision at all sites in Riverside area and target improvements at sites where quality does not reach this level.</p> <p>Identify opportunities to increase the quantity of provision in the longer term and ensure that regeneration programmes incorporate the provision of natural and semi-natural open spaces.</p>
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West area

- 5.78 Application of the quantity standard indicates that there is insufficient provision of natural and semi-natural open space to meet current and future demand. When also including the Mudflats South of Clive Sullivan Way, which exceed 15 ha and are excluded from calculations, the quantity is sufficient to meet the minimum standard.
- 5.79 Accessibility mapping indicates that there is a good distribution of natural and semi-natural open spaces in the West area. However, despite a good distribution of sites there are small accessibility deficiencies evident in the west of the Pickering ward and in the north west of Derringham ward (Figures 5.7 and 5.8).

Figure 5.7 – Deficiencies of natural and semi-natural open space in the Pickering ward

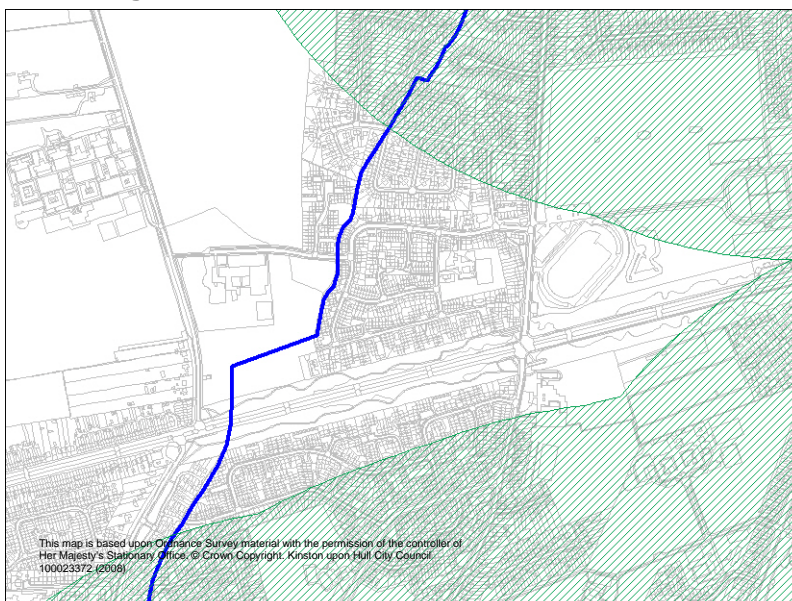
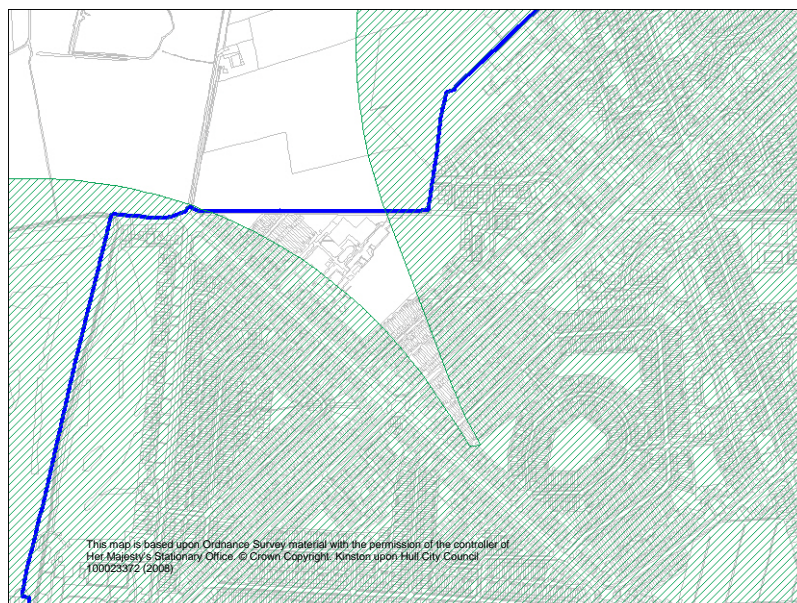


Figure 5.8 – Deficiencies of natural and semi-natural open space in the Derringham ward



- 5.80 The presence of numerous parks and amenity space provides an opportunity to address the deficiencies in natural and semi-natural open space by providing semi-natural space within other sites. Provision of a natural and semi-natural area within Costello Playing Fields would alleviate some of the deficiency and there are numerous amenity spaces within Derringham. The small lack of natural and semi-natural open space in Derringham reinforces the importance of the Northern Cemetery in terms of wildlife provision.
- 5.81 Should the occasion arise, opportunities to increase the provision of natural and semi-natural open space in the West area should be seized. Future focus should however remain on improving the quality of sites and access to this type of open space.
- 5.82 Site assessments reveal that there are many opportunities to increase the quality of sites in the West area. The average site score is only 54%, the second lowest in the city. Outside of the areas of deficiency, in the short term, improvements to the quality of sites should therefore be prioritised. Quality in terms of both recreation and biodiversity should be considered.

NSN12	<p>Prioritise improvements to the quality of existing sites within the West area.</p> <p>In order to address deficiencies in the Derringham and Pickering wards, consider the provision of semi-natural space within sites of other typologies. This will be particularly important long term if the quantity of provision is to meet local need.</p>
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Wyke area

- 5.83 The Wyke area contains the lowest level of natural and semi-natural open space (5.80 hectares). Unsurprisingly therefore, the application of the quantity standard reveals that there is insufficient provision to meet both current and future demand.

5.84 Based on the projected population growth set out in scenario b there is an expected shortfall of 13.71 hectares by 2026. Despite the shortfalls, there are only very small areas of deficiency to the west of Bricknell ward (Figure 5.9) and in the Avenue and Newland wards (Figure 5.10).

Figure 5.9 – Deficiencies of natural and semi-natural open space in the Bricknell ward

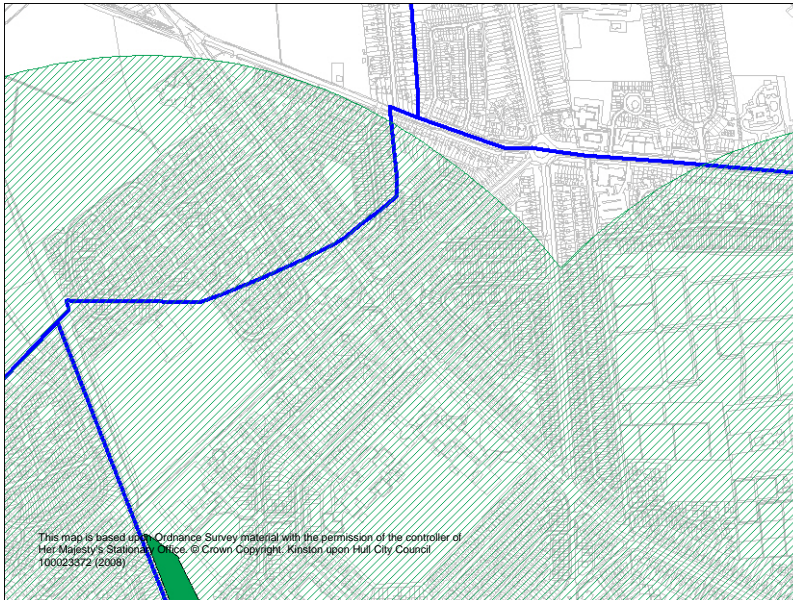
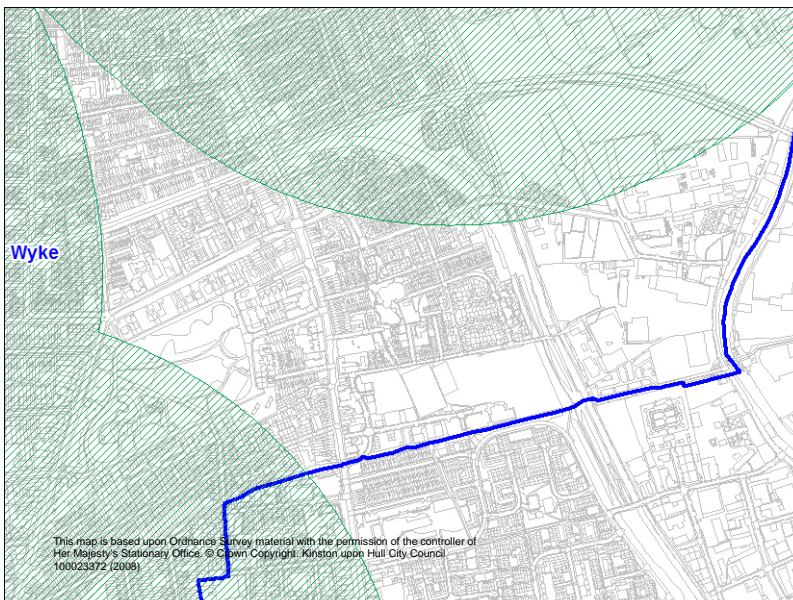


Figure 5.10 – Deficiencies in the Avenue and Newland wards



5.85 These deficiencies are relatively small, and almost all residents in areas deficient of natural and semi-natural open space are within the appropriate distance threshold of parks and amenity spaces. The provision of small semi-natural areas within some sites of other typologies should the opportunity arise would therefore ensure access to natural open space. The development of the River Hull Corridor would also benefit residents in the eastern area of Wyke area.

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- 5.86 The quality of natural open space in the Wyke area of the city is average. This should be maintained and improved.
- 5.87 Longer term, in consideration of the large shortfalls of natural and semi-natural open space increases in the quantity of provision will be required

NSN13

Provide new semi-natural open spaces within the areas identified as deficient in Wyke area where opportunities arise.

Improve the quality of existing natural and semi-natural open spaces in the short term. Longer term, new provision will be required to meet the needs of the growing population.

Summary

- 5.88 Natural and semi-natural open space is one of the most frequently visited type of open space in the city, indicated by 24% of respondents to the household survey. This emphasises the value of this type of open space.
- 5.89 In addition to the recreational value of natural resources, residents also frequently recognise the wider benefits of natural open spaces, particularly in terms of providing opportunities for biodiversity and habitat creation. Over 50% of natural open spaces assessed as part of the Phase 1 habitat surveys were evaluated as high or very high in terms of the diversity of habitats and species present on the site.
- 5.90 The need to protect natural and semi-natural open space from development was a key theme throughout consultation and while recreational opportunities should be encouraged, this should be balanced with conserving and promoting biodiversity.
- 5.91 Application of the recommended quality, quantity and accessibility standards highlights that the key priority for natural and semi-natural open space is improvements to the quality of sites. While there are quantitative deficiencies, the even distribution of sites means that the majority of residents fall within the appropriate catchment area of at least one natural open space. Maximising access to natural and semi-natural sites across the city and increasing awareness should also be a key priority of the Council going forward.
- 5.92 While the distribution of sites is good, the low quantity of natural and semi-natural open space in some areas of the city should be addressed over the HDF period, particularly in the event of the projected population growth identified in Scenarios b and c.

- 5.93 It is therefore recommended that the key priorities for the future delivery of provision of natural and semi-natural open space in Hull that should be addressed through the Hull Development Framework and/or other delivery mechanisms are:
- improve access to natural and semi-natural open spaces through improved signage as well as increasing local awareness
 - monitor the impact of recreation on natural and semi-natural open spaces
 - identify opportunities for improving the quality of natural and semi-natural open spaces, both in terms of the wildlife and habitat values of the site, but also for recreational purposes
 - maximise biodiversity on natural and semi-natural open spaces through the implementation of effective management and maintenance regimes. This might include active conservation management and the preparation of management plans for each site
 - consider the potential to designate one or more sites as a Local Nature Reserve
 - incorporate a policy protecting existing natural and semi-natural open space within the Hull Development Framework and a policy advocating improved biodiversity and conservation management
 - seek to improve the quality of sites across the city, particularly in areas where existing quality is poor (Riverside and West areas) and at sites where there are significant opportunities
 - facilitate the development of new semi-natural open spaces prioritising areas where access to natural open space is currently limited. These include the, Northern and Wyke areas. This may be through the inclusion of semi-natural open space within sites of another typology as well as promoting links to areas of countryside.