



City of Manchester

Open Space Assessment

Prepared For: Manchester City Council

Document Reference: 10280.01.001

August 2026

Version 9.0

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Document Title	Manchester City Open Space Assessment
Document Ref	10280.01.001
Version	Version 9.0
Prepared For	Manchester City Council

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Date	August 2026
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Amendment History					
Version	Date	Modified by	Check/ Approved by	Reason	Status
1.0	05/07/24	RM	MH	Initial issue	Superseded
2.0	26/07/24	RM	MH	Update following client comment	Superseded
3.0	09/09/24	VJ	RM	Updated quality standards	Superseded
4.0	06/02/25	RM	MH	Final issue	Superseded
5.0	21/05/25	AK	RM	Update to Executive Summary and paragraph 3.6	Superseded
6.0	28/05/26	RM	VJ	Update following Reg 18 Consultation	Superseded
7.0	09/06/26	RM	VJ	Update following client comment	Superseded
8.0	06/08/26	SB	VJ	Update following client comment, regarding accessibility.	Superseded
9.0	13/08/26	SB	VJ	Update following client comment, regarding accessibility.	Issued

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Executive Summary

1. TEP was commissioned by Manchester City Council in June 2024 to produce an updated Open Space Assessment (OSA) for the City of Manchester (the City). This OSA builds on work undertaken by KKP in 2022 and has been updated following Regulation 18 consultation.

Introduction

2. Open space is important due to its valuable contribution to quality of life, health and the economy. Provision of a range of open space facilities in our towns and villages is very important in planning for a sustainable future and is embedded in national planning policy.
3. The evidence in this OSA comprises an assessment of the quantity, accessibility, quality and value of open spaces within the City, and for each of the four sub-areas outlined below:
 - North;
 - Central;
 - South; and
 - Wythenshawe.
4. This OSA has been completed using the below methodology:
 - Define the context, purpose and scope of the OSA (Chapter 1);
 - Review of national and local policy (Chapter 2);
 - Identification and mapping of open spaces per typology (Chapter 3);
 - Identify local needs including consultation with key stakeholders (Chapter 4);
 - Assess the quantity, quality and accessibility of each open space (Chapter 5);
 - Develop local standards for open space provision (Chapter 6);
 - Review of current provision of each sub-area (Chapter 7); and
 - Provide recommendations and strategy based on the findings of the Open Spaces OSA (Chapter 8).

Methodology

5. This OSA is in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) for Open Space, which have replaced Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation (2002) and its companion guide, Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A companion guide to Planning Policy Guidance 17 (2002).

6. This OSA considers all amenity greenspace and natural and semi-natural greenspaces over 0.2 hectares, including multifunctional sports facilities (e.g. those which are available for wider community use). Parks and Gardens, Play provision, civic space, cemeteries and allotments of all sizes are included. This Assessment excludes specific sport provision which is covered in other studies e.g. the Manchester Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy. On sites with multiple functions, pitches contribute to the overall site area and overall open space provision.
7. Revised standards, including from Fields in Trust have been published since the earlier iterations of this Assessment. Where relevant the new standards have been reviewed.

Open Space Provision as of 2026

8. The current open space provision in the City is shown in the table below. 991 sites are designated as open space, with a total area of 1,921.44 hectares. Parks and Gardens (Note: Parks and Gardens refers to public parks and gardens, and excludes private residential gardens) cover 776.29ha and accounts for the majority of the City's open space provision. The total open space within the City equates to 3.33 ha per 1,000 population.
9. Sites categorised as "Other" i.e. those which are not accessible, for example, privately owned, fenced or on motorway embankments, or which are documented in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) or Employment Study, have not been assessed as part of the total open space provision. This is because they:
 - Do not currently provide publicly accessible recreational open space; or
 - Are likely to be developed over the lifetime of the next Local Plan and, therefore, will not provide publicly accessible open space by the end of the plan period.
10. Any SHLAA or Employment Study site which is currently considered open space should still be assessed for its open space value on an individual basis as part of any planning application for that site, in line with national and local planning policy.
11. Open spaces which previously fell in a SHLAA or Employment land, but are no longer in a SHLAA or Employment land site have been re-considered as part of the 2026 update.

Open Space Typology	Current Provision (ha)
Allotments and Community Gardens	56.24
Amenity Greenspace	297.85
Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	158.12
Civic Spaces	9.90

Open Space Typology	Current Provision (ha)
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace	600.78
Parks and Gardens	776.29 (including 489.04 Strategic Parks)
Provision for Children and Young People	22.26
Final total - rounded to two decimal places	1,921.44

Quantity Assessment and Standards

12. The proposed quantity standard reflects the current level of provision due to the lack of available space for new provision. An assessment of quantity against population figures and best practice guidance has also been undertaken. This has been used to identify possible shortfalls in provision and help inform priorities. Applying the proposed standard against the current, and future forecast population up to 2039 can be used to identify future shortfalls against the proposed Standard.

Open Space Typology	Proposed Standard (ha per 1,000)	2026 ha per 1,000	2039 ha per 1,000
Allotments and Community Gardens	0.10	0.10	0.09
Amenity Greenspace	0.52	0.52	0.48
Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	0.27	0.27	0.25
Civic Spaces	0.02	0.02	0.02
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace	1.04	1.04	0.96
Parks and Gardens	1.35 (incl. 0.85 Strategic Parks)	1.35 (incl. 0.85 Strategic Parks)	1.24 (incl. 0.78 Strategic Parks)
Provision for Children and Young People	0.04	0.04	0.04

13. As of 2026 the population for the City was 576,564. The future population of the City is projected to be 626,325 by 2039. When compared to the current provision of open space, this increase in population would result in reduction in the amount of open space per 1,000 population.

Quality and Value

14. Of the 991 open spaces in the City, 447 sites were audited for Quality and Value. The following open space typologies were excluded from the site audits, for the reasons set out below:
- Sites smaller than 0.2 ha, smaller sites have limited usage compared to larger sites and limited multi-functionality;
 - Outdoor Sports Facilities with a sole sporting purpose - These are considered separately in the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy; and
 - Sites within the 2022 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, or Pipeline Employment site (2022) as these are expected to come forward for development within the lifetime of the emerging Local Plan.
15. The Table below shows the current Quality scores for the 447 audited sites.
- | Quality Score against Green Flag Award Criteria | Number of sites | % of Audit |
|---|-----------------|-------------|
| Excellent | 0 | 0% |
| Very Good | 75 | 17% |
| Good | 92 | 21% |
| Fair | 188 | 42% |
| Poor | 92 | 21% |
| Total | 447 | 100% |
16. The recommended Quality standard is for the following sites over 0.2ha, to achieve a Good Quality Score (60% or above):
- Amenity Greenspace;
 - Civic Space;
 - Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace;
 - Parks and Gardens; and
 - Provision for Children and Young People.
17. A Quality standard has not been set for Allotments and Community Gardens or Cemeteries and Churchyards due to the nature and specific use of these spaces.
18. The proposed value standard is based on 'Assessing needs and opportunities: a companion guide to PPG17':
- High - 60 to 100%
 - Medium - 40 to 59%
 - Low - 0 to 39%

19. The table below shows the current value of the 446 sites audited.

Value Score	Number of Sites	% of Audit
High	171	38%
Medium	175	39%
Low	101	23%
Total	447	100%

20. The recommended Value standard is for the following sites over 0.2ha to obtain a Value Score of 40% or above, classed as "Medium" Value:

- Amenity Greenspace;
- Civic Space;
- Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace;
- Parks and Gardens; and
- Provision for Children and Young People.

Accessibility

21. Amenity Greenspace, Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace, Parks and Gardens and Provision for Children and Young People have been assigned an accessibility standard.
22. Accessibility standards have not been set for allotments, civic spaces and community gardens or cemeteries or burial grounds due to the nature of these sites.
23. The proposed accessibility standards are shown 'as the crow flies' (straight line) from an open space. This has been converted into walking time to show approximately how long it should take for residents to walk to their local open space typology. The accessibility standards are shown in the table below.

Open Space Typology	Walking Threshold
Allotments and Community Gardens	n/a
Amenity Greenspace	480 metres (10-minute walk)
Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	n/a
Civic Spaces	n/a
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace	720 metres (15-minute walk)
Parks and Gardens	710 metres (15-minute walk)
Provision for Children and Young People	Local Area of Play (LAP) (100m)

24. Maps 1-4 Open Space Accessibility for Parks and Gardens, Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace, Amenity Greenspace and Provision for Children and Young People (G10280.01.004A, .005A, .006B and .007A), show accessibility catchments

for each relevant open space typology. Accessibility to each typology varies between sub-areas. Parks and gardens accessibility is generally highest in the central sub-area. Full analysis of accessibility to open space by typology is provided in Chapter 5 Auditing Local Provision.

25. For this OSA, straight-line modelling has been used when assessing accessibility to open space sites.

Recommendations

26. Recommendations have been made in Chapter 8 Recommendations and Strategy. The recommendations include:
- Adopt the recommended standards (Chapter 7);
 - Increase the multi-functionality of open spaces where possible, including increasing green travel routes, improving aesthetic, increasing habitat for wildlife and the cultural offering;
 - Production of a guidance document to outline open space requirements in new developments;
 - Seek funding opportunities including through developer contributions and prioritise investment to low quality/low value sites to improve them; and
 - Provide an updated Assessment of open space to document changes in the baseline and ensure the approach to open spaces across the City meets the needs of residents. See Chapter 8 for further information.

1.0 Introduction

Context

1.1 Open space is important because of its valuable contribution to quality of life, health and the economy. Furthermore, open spaces provide green infrastructure (GI) benefits such as mitigating climate change, flood alleviation, and ecosystem services. The provision of these facilities in our cities, towns and villages is of high importance to a sustainable future and is embedded in national planning policy.

1.2 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), updated in December 2024, recognises the opportunities that appropriately located and well-designed open spaces can provide. Paragraph 103 states:

Access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.

1.3 Open space provision crosses many other aspects of the NPPF including:

- Promoting healthy and safe communities;
- Delivering sustainable development;
- Supporting a prosperous rural economy;
- Promoting sustainable transport;
- Requiring good design;
- Conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment; and
- Meeting the challenges of climate change.

Purpose and Scope

1.4 TEP was commissioned by Manchester City Council (MCC) in June 2024 to produce an updated Open Space Assessment (OSA) for the City of Manchester (the City). This OSA builds on work undertaken by KKP in 2022, and V6.0 of this Assessment reflects changes following Regulation 18 consultation.

1.5 The evidence in this OSA comprises an assessment of the quantity, accessibility, quality and value of open spaces within the City.

1.6 This OSA has been completed using the following structure:

- Define the context, purpose and scope of the OSA (Chapter 1);
 - Review of national and local policy (Chapter 2);
 - Identification and mapping of open spaces per typology (Chapter 3);
 - Identify local needs including consultation with key stakeholders (Chapter 4);
 - Assess the quantity, quality and accessibility of each open space (Chapter 5);
 - Develop local standards for open space provision (Chapter 6);
 - Review of current provision of each sub-area (Chapter 7); and
 - Provide recommendations and strategy based on the findings of the Open Spaces OSA (Chapter 8).
- 1.7 The OSA provides robust and up to date information concerning the demand and use of open space throughout the City irrespective of ownership. It supports the current use of the existing Local Plan (Core Strategy 2012-2027) and the preparation of the emerging new Local Plan. Dates are aligned with Places for Everyone (PfE), up to 2039.
- 1.8 This OSA will identify open spaces of poorer quality and/or lower value, which will assist the Council to bid for funds and prioritise investment in improvements. It will also help with the consideration of local open space needs in determining planning applications and the potential for developer contributions.

Methodology

- 1.9 This OSA is in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) for Open Space, which have replaced Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation (2002) and its companion guide, Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A companion guide to Planning Policy Guidance 17 (2002).
- 1.10 This Open Space Assessment (hereby referred to as the OSA) replaces the City-Wide Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation Study, adopted by Manchester City Council (hereby referred to as 'the Council') in August 2009.
- 1.11 The following typologies are included in this OSA, further descriptions are provided in Table 1
- Allotments and community gardens;
 - Amenity greenspace;
 - Cemeteries and churchyards;
 - Civic Spaces;
 - Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace;
 - Parks and Gardens; and

- Provision for Children and Young People.
- 1.12 This OSA considers all amenity greenspaces and natural and semi-natural greenspaces over 0.2 hectares, including multifunctional sports facilities (e.g. those which are available for wider community use). All accessible cemeteries, accessible play areas, parks and gardens, cemeteries, allotments and civic spaces are included. This Assessment excludes specific sport provision which is covered in other studies e.g. the Manchester Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy. On sites with multiple functions, pitches contribute to the overall site area and overall open space provision.

Analysis Area

- 1.13 The OSA looks at the overall provision of the City and across four sub-areas of North, Central, South and Wythenshawe. The sub-areas are consistent with other evidence-based studies and are based on amalgamated wards shown in Appendix A.
- 1.14 The sub-areas boundaries are shown on Map 5 Open Space Typology Map (ref: G10280.01.001C).

2.0 Policy Context

- 2.1 This chapter summarises how open spaces feature in the following national and local policy. Figure 1 illustrates the hierarchy of planning policy for the City.

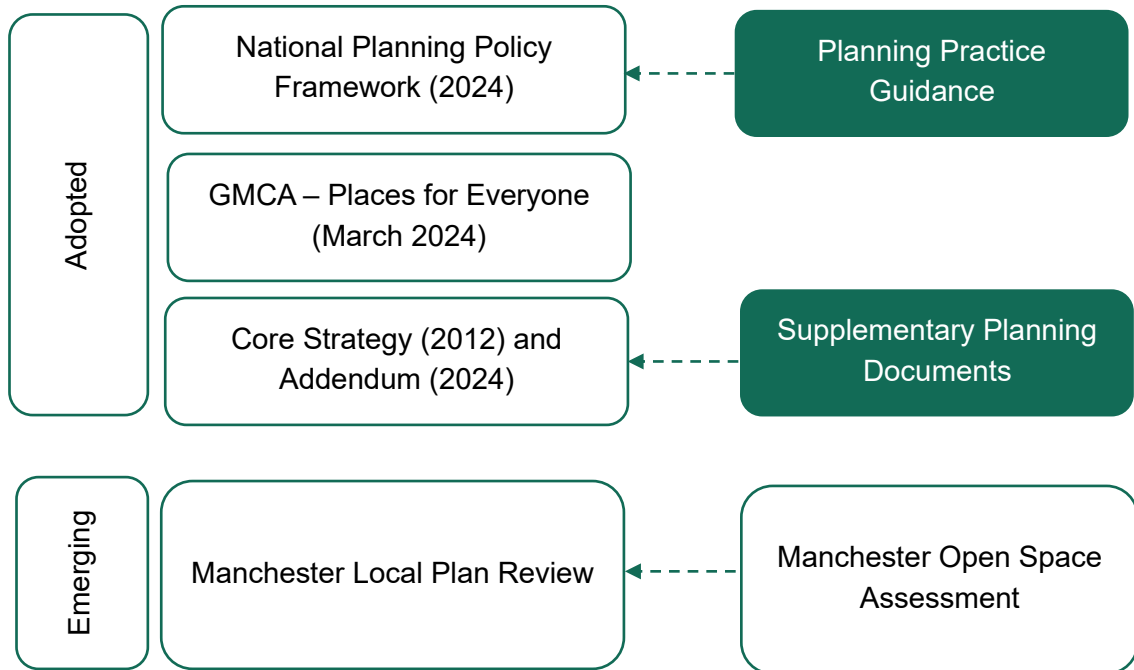


Figure 1: Hierarchy of Planning Policy in Manchester City

National Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2024)

- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in December 2024 and sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are to be applied. The NPPF is a material consideration in decision and Local Plan making. The NPPF requirements in relation to open space are outlined in the following paragraphs.

- 2.3 The NPPF defines 'open space' as:

"All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity".

Plan-Making

- 2.4 Paragraph 20 outlines that Strategic Policies as set by local authorities should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of places, making specific

provision for the '*conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation*'.

Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities

- 2.5 Paragraph 96 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive, safe, and accessible places which promote social interaction and enable and support healthy lifestyles.
- 2.6 Paragraph 103 states that access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision.
- 2.7 Paragraph 104 states that existing open space, including sports and recreational buildings and playing fields, should not be built on unless an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space is surplus to requirements; or the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in a suitable location; or the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision.

Local Green Space Designation

- 2.8 Paragraphs 106 to 108 in the NPPF set out the Local Green Space designation as a way for communities to identify and protect green space of particular importance to them through local and neighbourhood plans. For the Local Green Space designation to be used the green space must be:
 - in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
 - demonstrably special to the local community with a particular local significance (aesthetically, historical, recreational or environmental); and
 - local in character and not an extensive tract of land.
- 2.9 The NPPF states that local policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts.

Achieving well-designed places

- 2.10 Paragraph 136 states that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined and that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments.

Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

- 2.11 The NPPF emphasises that responding to climate change is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.
- 2.12 Paragraph 162 states that plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts.
- 2.13 Furthermore paragraph 164 states that new development should be planned to avoid increased impacts from climate change. In areas which are vulnerable from impacts of climate change these should be mitigated against and managed through suitable adaption measures, such as green infrastructure (GI). Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment
- 2.14 Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that the planning system has a role to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Valued landscapes and ecosystems should be protected, with development prevented from adversely affecting soil, air or water, or from causing noise pollution and land instability.
- 2.15 The NPPF states in paragraph 192 that local planning authorities should plan to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity. This should be achieved through identifying and mapping local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them. Furthermore, plans should promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.
- 2.16 Paragraph 193 states that planning applications should promote opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments and should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.
- 2.17 With regards to GI, paragraph 199 states that there are opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts through the provision and enhancement of GI.

Planning Practice Guidance

Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities; Public Rights of Way; and Local Greenspace (March 2014) (Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space>)

- 2.18 This planning practice guidance (PPG) provides advice on open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way (PRoW) and the Local Green Space designation. The guidance states that it is for local planning authorities to assess the need for open space and opportunities for new provision in their areas. It describes the Local Green Space designation in further detail than the NPPF.

Healthy and Safe Communities (August 2022) (Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/health-and-wellbeing>)

- 2.19 The Healthy and Safe Communities PPG sets out key advice on the how to account for health and wellbeing in the planning process in two ways:
- Creating environments that support and encourage healthy lifestyles; and
 - Identifying and securing the facilities needed for primary, secondary and tertiary care and the wider health and care system.

- 2.20 This PPG states how planning can influence the built environment to improve health and reduce levels of obesity in local communities.

- 2.21 The PPG also covers the promotion of the benefits of estate regeneration and supporting safe communities.

Climate Change (March 2019) (Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/climate-change>)

- 2.22 The Climate Change PPG advises how to identify suitable mitigation and adaption measures in the planning process to address the impacts of climate change.

- 2.23 The PPG states that the impact of climate change needs to be considered in a realistic way and, as part of this, local planning authorities should identify no or low-cost responses to climate risks that deliver a multitude of benefits, for example, GI that improves adaption, biodiversity and amenity.

- 2.24 Furthermore, the Climate Change PPG states that when Local Authorities are preparing Local Plans and taking planning decisions, they should pay particular attention to integrating adaptation and mitigation approaches and looking for 'win-win' solutions. For example, the provision of multi-functional GI can reduce urban heat islands, manage flooding and help species adapt to climate change whilst also contributing to a pleasant environment that encourages people to walk and cycle.

Natural Environment (June 2025) (Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment>)

- 2.25 The Natural Environment PPG advises on land of environmental value, GI, biodiversity and ecosystems and landscape.
- 2.26 The PPG highlights the importance of GI as a natural capital asset. These include community benefits such as enhancing wellbeing, outdoor recreation and access, enhanced biodiversity and landscapes, food and energy production and mitigating the effects of climate change, such as urban cooling and flood risk management.
- 2.27 The PPG also identifies the benefits of wider environmental net gain to reduce pressure on and achieve overall improvements in natural capital, ecosystem services and the benefit they deliver.

Flood Risk and Coastal Change (September 2025) (Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change>)

- 2.28 The Flood Risk and Coastal Change PPG advises how to take account of, and address the risks associated with flooding and coastal change in the planning process.
- 2.29 The PPG highlights that open space provide opportunities to reduce overall flood risk in a development area and beyond. Sustainable drainage systems provide opportunities such as combining water management with green space with associated benefits for amenity, recreation and wildlife.

A Green Future: Our 25-Year Plan to Improve the Environment

- 2.30 The 25-Year Environment Plan (Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>) sets out government actions to help the natural world regain and retain good health. It aims to deliver cleaner air and water in our cities and rural landscapes, protect threatened species and provide richer wildlife habitats.
- 2.31 Policies are divided into key areas to focus actions:
 - Using and managing land sustainability;
 - Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes;
 - Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing;
 - Increasing resource efficiency and reducing pollution and waste;
 - Securing clean, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans; and
 - Protecting and improving the global environment.

Greater Manchester Policy Context

- 2.32 Manchester City Council forms part of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), which is made up of ten local authorities.
- 2.33 The Greater Manchester Strategy was published in July 2025. It seeks to enable a thriving city region where everyone can live a good life.
- 2.34 The Greater Manchester Plan for Jobs, Homes and the Environment (known as GMSF), started in 2016 and was a joint development plan between all ten Greater Manchester local authorities. However, in December 2020 Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council decided not to continue with the GMSF 2020. Therefore, GMSF was revised in 2020 and the Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Plan was adopted in 2024, covering the nine remaining Greater Manchester local authorities (including Manchester City Council).
- 2.35 PfE Joint Plan which took effect and became part of the statutory development plan for each of the nine PfE authorities in March 2024 includes key aims for Manchester, which are:
- Making the most of the key locations and assets;
 - Address disparities; and
 - Creating places more resilient to climate change.
- 2.36 Specific policies which relate to open space in this joint local plan are as follows:
- Policy JP-G 6 - Urban Green Space: To ensure there is an appropriate scale, type, quality and distribution of accessible urban green space that can support a high quality of life and other important green infrastructure functions;
 - Policy JP-P-1 Sustainable Places: Incorporating high quality and well managed GI and quality public realm, with:
 - A. Opportunities for recreation and outdoor play for children, and interaction between the generations;
 - B. Public and private spaces clearly distinguished;
 - C. Development clearly defining, and promoting activity within, public spaces; and
 - D. High quality landscaping with schemes
 - Policy JP-P-6 - Health: To help tackle health inequality new development will be required, where practicable to maximise positive contribution to health and wellbeing, and support healthy lifestyles through the use of active design principles.
 - Policy JP-P 7- Sport and Recreation: Develop a network of high quality and accessible sports and recreation facilities, supporting greater levels of activity for all ages.

Local Policy

- 2.37 Manchester's Core Strategy was adopted in July 2012 and is the key Development Plan document in the Local Development Framework. The Strategy was updated following the adoption of PfE in March 2024, and lists Core Strategy Policies replaced by PfE policies.
- 2.38 The current Local Plan is under review, and a key issues paper was published in May 2020 which identified the challenges which will influence the Local Plan. The document formed the initial stage of the consultation process for the Local Plan Review. The Regulation 18 consultation for the draft Manchester Local Plan concluded November 2025.
- 2.39 A key challenge identified was the preservation of open space, including where neighbourhoods become increasingly dense, and the demand for open space increases.
- 2.40 The Core Strategy sets out a Vision of "Manchester as a successful city with a growing economy, an increasing and healthy population and a place where people choose to live."
- 2.41 The vision was developed further through the Council's "Our Manchester Strategy". The strategy provides a long-term vision and strategy for Manchester.

Vision and Objectives

- 2.42 The vision for the City from the Core Strategy DPD states that by 2027, Manchester will be:
- 'A successful sustainable and accessible City in the front rank of cities in Europe and the world.
 - A City with a growing economy driven by the strength of the regional centre and Manchester Airport which supports a successful City region.
 - Meeting the challenge of climate change at the forefront of environmental initiatives and improvements.
 - A City with an increased and sustainable healthy population and a community which both benefits from and drives the City's productivity upwards.
 - A City with neighbourhoods where people choose to live all their lives because they offer a wide range of quality housing and an attractive environment where locally distinctive character is conserved and enhanced.
 - A City with thriving district centres, which have a distinct local character and provide a good range of accessible public services, retail and local facilities.

- A City which is supported by transport infrastructure which provides sustainable and efficient links locally, within the city, and more widely, between the Regional Centre and workers across the City region. It will also have strong national and international connections made possible by its world class airport.
 - A City defined by excellence in urban design and environmental quality, where its distinctive historic environment is understood, valued, cared for and its potential fully realised.
 - A City where residents and visitors regularly enjoy a network of quality open spaces, parks and river valleys, enriched with biodiversity.
 - An international destination for tourism and culture with the Eastlands area of the regional centre a national attraction for sport, leisure and recreation.'
- 2.43 Manchester City Council (MCC) will maintain and create a network of open spaces which provide all residents with good access to recreational opportunities to achieve the vision outlined below. The River Valleys (the Irk, Medlock and Mersey) and City Parks are particularly important, and access to these resources will be improved.
- 2.44 The Vision includes that Manchester will be 'A City where residents and visitors regularly enjoy a network of quality open spaces, parks and river valleys, enriched with biodiversity'.

Other relevant documents:

- 2.45 The following other documents have been reviewed as part of this Open Space Assessment and details are provided in Appendix B:
- Manchester Parks Strategy (2017 - 2027);
 - Manchester City Council Climate Change Framework (2020-2025);
 - Manchester's Great Outdoors;
 - Our Rivers, Our City Strategy (2021)
 - Manchester City Council: Design for Access 2;
 - Manchester Residential Quality Guidance (2017);
 - Year of the Child Survey (2022);
 - Manchester Play Satisfaction (2021);
 - Greater Manchester Air Quality Action Plan; and
 - Core Strategy DPD - developer contributions.

3.0 Method

Guidance and Best Practice

- 3.1 This Open Space Assessment is in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) for Open Space, which have replaced Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation (2002) and its Companion Guide, Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A companion guide to Planning Policy Guidance 17 (2002).
- 3.2 Whilst the Companion Guide to Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 has been superseded, it is acknowledged that the principles and approach within the guidance have not been replaced and it is still relevant to apply the methodology to assess needs for open space provision.

Stages of the Assessment

- 3.3 The Open Space Assessment follows a five-stage process. Stage 1 identifies local needs for open space provision. Stage 2 audits existing local provision to establish the quantity, quality and accessibility of open spaces. Stage 3 sets provision standards based on the evidence gathered. Stage 4 applies these standards to assess current and future open space requirements and identify any deficiencies or surpluses. Stage 5 uses the findings to inform the drafting of planning policies and recommendations for open space provision and management.

Typologies

- 3.4 Table 1 provides a description of each of the open space typologies included in this Assessment. A threshold of 0.2 hectares has been applied to Amenity Greenspace and Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace in line with the Companion Guide to PPG17. All other publicly accessible sites across the remaining typologies are included.
- 3.5 Sports pitches which serve multiple functions and contribute to overall open space provision are included in this Assessment, however sole-purpose pitches are not included as they are considered in the Outdoor Sports and Playing Pitch Strategy.
- 3.6 Amenity greenspace and natural and semi-natural sites listed in the 2022 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), or Pipeline Employment Site (2022) were not included in the OSA as they were expected to come forward for development within the lifetime of the emerging Local Plan. This to provide an estimate of the amount of these typologies that could realistically be provided across the City in the relation to housing and employment targets.
- 3.7 As part of the 2026 update, sites which were listed in the 2022 SHLAA or Employment Sites, but remain open space and no longer fall in the 2025 SHLAA

layer, have been included in the revised Assessment. SHLAA sites are reassessed annually to determine the level of impact in open space categorised as Other (sites which fall in SHLAA).

- 3.8 Any SHLAA or Employment Study site which is currently considered open space should still be assessed for its open space value on an individual basis as part of any planning application for that site, in line with national and local planning policy.
- 3.9 As part of this Assessment TEP has undertaken a data consolidation exercise, including of comparison with Ordnance Survey layers, update to sites including those to be removed, and updates or merging of site boundaries. Sites which were split into several polygons have been amalgamated to generate an overall site, this also captured previously missing areas between split polygons.
- 3.10 As part of the 2026 update following Regulation 18 consultation, the GIS database has been updated to remove anomalies such as amenity greenspaces lower than 0.2 ha, and add in additional open spaces which were not previously identified.

Table 1: Open Space Typologies included in the Open Space Assessment

Open Space Typology	Description
Allotments	Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.
Amenity Greenspace	Most commonly but not exclusively found in housing areas. Includes informal recreation green spaces and village greens.
Cemeteries, Churchyards and other Burial Grounds	Cemeteries and churchyards including disused churchyards and other burial grounds.
Civic Spaces	Mostly hard surfaced areas usually located within town or city centres.
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace	Includes country parks, nature reserves, publicly accessible woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands, wetlands and wastelands
Parks and Gardens	Includes urban parks and formal gardens. Parks usually contain a variety of facilities and may have one or more of the other types of open space within them. Note this typology does not include private residential gardens.
Provision for Children and Young People	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction specifically designed as equipped play facilities for young people and children.

Quantity

- 3.11 The quantity assessment is carried out through a desk-based GIS exercise, using open space data provided by the Council. Open space sites are mapped in a GIS geo-database which provides total area in hectares of each site. Each site is assigned an open space typology so that a total area of sites by typology can be calculated.
- 3.12 The quantity provision of sites is based on the Council's Open Space Asset list. Further updates to the open space data have been captured during the site audits by KKP in 2022, and through an update of data by TEP in 2024, and 2026 following Reg 18 consultation. Most, but not all open spaces are within the Council's ownership, however some publicly accessible sites may be in private ownership.
- 3.13 When combined with population figures, quantity can be expressed in terms of a hectare per 1,000 population figures. This is the way that local authorities express their quantity of open space and is how quantity standards for open space are expressed.
- 3.14 In this assessment, total area, or in some cases numbers of sites, has been used to calculate the current quantity provision for the City and each sub-area. Population figures have been used to calculate the hectare per 1,000 population figures for each typology on a City-wide basis, for the current and future population.

Quality

- 3.15 KKP undertook site audits in spring/summer 2022. Sites which were accessible were included in the quality and value audit, and each site was classified based on its core typology.
- 3.16 All parks and gardens and provision for children and young people, were audited as well as amenity greenspace and natural and semi-natural greenspaces over 1 hectare. Only sites which are publicly available were audited.
- 3.17 Allotments and cemeteries and churchyards were not audited due to the nature of the sites. As audits were undertaken in 2022, any sites subsequently identified and added to the dataset have not been audited.
- 3.18 The audit methodology applies scoring to adjacent sites of the same typology to ensure the wider network of that typology is considered, and for budgetary and logistical constraints.
- 3.19 The open space quality assessment is based on site audits aligned to the Green Flag Award assessment criteria. The Green Flag Award is widely recognised as a quality benchmark for parks and green spaces, is advocated by Fields in Trust (FiT) and used by many other local authorities as part of their open space assessments.

- 3.20 This is utilised to calculate a quality score for each site visited. Scores in the database are presented as percentage figures allowing a relative comparison of open spaces across the City.
- 3.21 Additional criteria for provision for children and young people, is also built around the Green Flag Award. This visual assessment of the site includes a review of general equipment and surface quality/appearance plus an assessment of additional street furniture.
- 3.22 The Quality audit comprises an assessment of:
- Physical access - e.g. public transport links, directional signposts;
 - Personal security - e.g. site is overlooked, natural surveillance;
 - Access-social - e.g. appropriate minimum entrance widths;
 - Parking - e.g. availability, specific, disabled parking;
 - Information signage - e.g. presence of up-to-date site information, notice boards;
 - Equipment and facilities - e.g. assessment of both adequacy and maintenance of provision such as seats, benches, bins, toilets;
 - Site problems, e.g. presence of vandalism, graffiti;
 - Healthy, safe and secure, e.g. fencing, gates, staff on site;
 - Maintenance and cleanliness, e.g. condition of general landscape & features;
 - Groups that the site meets the needs of, e.g. elderly, young people; and
 - Site potential e.g. possible enhancements to improve a site.
- 3.23 The quality assessment does not attempt to 'judge' all sites as to whether they would pass or fail the Green Flag Award. This would not be appropriate to do as part of an Open Space Assessment due to the types and nature of the sites; the proportionate amount of time needed to spend assessing each site in full; and the information available to undertake the assessment. The full Green Flag Award process involves reviewing a management plan for each site, and undertaking a site visit with the site managers, key stakeholders and the local community.
- 3.24 The full site audit results are included as Appendix C.

Value

- 3.25 The open space value assessment is based on 'Assessing needs and opportunities: a companion guide to PPG17 (September 2002) (Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7660/156780.pdf). Although PPG17 has been superseded by the NPPF 2024, there has been no supporting guidance published to supersede

'Assessing needs and opportunity: a companion guide to PPG17'. This is the most up to date guidance for value assessment for open spaces.

3.26 The Value assessment as defined in the Companion Guide to PPG17 seeks to review:

- Site context - accessibility, historic value and sense of place;
- Function - level and type of use; and
- Wider benefits - to people, nature and the environment.

3.27 The Value Assessment comprises a review of each audited site's:

- Level of use (observations only), e.g., evidence of different user types (e.g. dog walkers, joggers, children) throughout day, located near school and/or community facility;
- Context of site in relation to other open spaces;
- Structural and landscape benefits, e.g., well located, high quality defining the identity/ area;
- Ecological benefits, e.g., supports/promotes biodiversity and wildlife habitats;
- Educational benefits, e.g., provides learning opportunities on nature/historic landscapes;
- Social inclusion and health benefits, e.g., promotes civic pride, community ownership and a sense of belonging; helping to promote well-being;
- Cultural and heritage benefits, e.g., historic elements/links (e.g. listed building, statues) and high-profile symbols of local area;
- Amenity benefits and a sense of place, e.g., attractive places that are safe and well maintained; helping to create specific neighbourhoods and landmarks; and
- Economic benefits, e.g., enhances property values, promotes economic activity and attracts people from near and far.

3.28 Provision for Children and Young People is scored as part of the value audit including the site size, range of equipment and play type.

Quality and Value Matrix

3.29 The Value of a site, in conjunction with the Quality, can be used to guide planning decisions about the future of the sites as shown in Table 2.

3.30 Quality and Value scores are independent of one and other. A poor-quality site may be unkempt and poorly maintained, however may provide a highly valuable open space within the local area.

Table 2: Quality and Value Matrix

Poor Quality High Value High value sites that are poor quality should look to be enhanced in terms of their quality	Good Quality High Value Ideally all spaces should fall into this category, and decisions focused on protection of the best sites
Poor Quality Low Value Where possible look to enhance quality and value, or review if sites are surplus to requirements	Good Quality Low Value Where possible look to enhance value in terms of the functions the sites provide, or consider if value could increase by a change of use

Accessibility

- 3.31 The accessibility assessment applies Walking Thresholds ('as the crow flies') to open spaces. Walking Thresholds are shown on accessibility maps in this report to indicate areas with access to each type of open space, and those without. For this Assessment, straight line buffers have been used.
- 3.32 Table 3 sets out the walking distances and walking thresholds from the Fields in Trust (FiT) Guidance for Outdoor Sports and Play – Beyond the Six Acre Standard and the Existing OSA (2009), and how the distances, in metres (m) can be interpreted as walking time. The revised Fields in Trust standards, Creating Great Spaces for All (2024) recommends all homes should be within 200-300m walking distance of open space, and that everyone should be able to access each typology within 1,000m.
- 3.33 When applied, accessibility buffers can be used to identify deficiencies in access to specific open space provision across an area. Cross-boundary provision has been considered as part of this OSA as users of sites do not only visit those within a specific Local Authority area.

Table 3: Walking Distance, Thresholds and Time

Typology	Benchmark Standard (taken from FiT Beyond the Six Acre Standard)	Existing Accessibility Standard (Taken from Core Strategy)
Allotments	None set	15 minute walk time (approx. 720m)
Amenity Greenspace	480 metres	10 minute walk time (480m)
Cemeteries & Burial Grounds	None set	N/A
Civic Spaces	None set	N/A

Typology	Benchmark Standard (taken from FiT Beyond the Six Acre Standard)	Existing Accessibility Standard (Taken from Core Strategy)
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspaces	720 metres	15 minutes' walk time/ 720 metres City Centre - 15 minute drive time (public transport)
Parks and Gardens	710 metres	City Parks (and city centre) - 15 minute public transport time Local Parks - 10 minute walk time (480m)
Provision for Children	LAP - 100 metres LEAP - 400 metres NEAP – 1,000 metres MUGA - 700m	10 minutes' walk time (480 metres)
Provision for Young People	LAP - 100 metres LEAP - 400 metres NEAP – 1,000 metres MUGA - 700m	15 minutes' walk time (720 metres)

4.0 Identifying Local Needs

National Strategy Documents

4.1 The following strategy documents provide an overview of the national strategic context and actions in relation to open space and are summarised in the following paragraphs:

- Promoting Healthy Cities (Royal Town Planning Institute);
- Green Infrastructure Strategies (Natural England);
- The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP) The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (2011); and
- Everybody Active, Every Day (Public Health England, 2014).

Promoting Healthy Cities (Royal Town Planning Institute)

4.2 The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) published Promoting Healthy Cities (Available at: <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/policy/2014/february/promoting-healthy-cities/>), a document tackling the role of planning in creating healthy cities in October 2014.

4.3 The report calls for the UK to develop more integrated strategies for healthy place making, gather greater intelligence on the social and economic determinants of health and reform and strengthen institutions to ensure integration of health policies. This process should involve a range of professions and community stakeholders.

Green Infrastructure Strategies (Natural England)

4.4 Green Infrastructure Strategies (Natural England, October 2014) (Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35033>) provides guidance on:

- Why we need GI;
- What GI should achieve;
- What GI is; and
- GI strategies.

4.5 Natural England states that GI:

"Contributes so much to the setting and quality of people's living and working environments, and its role in generating economic benefit has often been overlooked".

4.6 The guidance states that "policies and decisions on development proposals should conserve and enhance environmental assets". Consideration should be made to providing off road, green routes for walkers and cyclists, and consider privately

owned land, which provides connectivity for wildlife, and helps tackle climate change and flooding.

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

- 4.7 The NEWP states that “People cannot flourish without the benefits and services our natural environment provide (Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7cb8fce5274a38e57565a4/8082.pdf>). Nature is a complex, interconnected system. A healthy, properly functioning natural environment is the foundation of sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing”.
- 4.8 The Government wants to put the value of nature at the heart of decision-making, in Government, local communities and businesses. To achieve this the NEWP focuses on 4 key areas:
- Protecting and improving our natural environment - Achieve a better-quality natural environment by taking and promoting actions across farmed land, woodlands and forests, towns and cities, and rivers and water bodies;
 - Growing the green economy - Economic growth and the natural environment are mutually compatible. Sustainable economic growth relies on services provided by the natural environment, often referred to as ‘ecosystem services’;
 - Reconnecting people and nature - High-quality natural environments foster healthy neighbourhoods; green spaces encourage social activity and reduce crime. The natural environment can help children’s learning; and
 - International and EU leadership - Environmental leadership should be demonstrable internationally and within the EU, to protect and enhance natural assets globally, promoting environmentally and socially sustainable growth.

Everybody Active, Every Day (Public Health England, 2014)

- 4.9 Everybody Active, Every Day is the national physical activity framework for England (Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/everybody-active-every-day-a-framework-to-embed-physical-activity-into-daily-life>). The aim of the framework is to bring about real and long-lasting change using a long-term, evidence-based approach to embed physical activity into the fabric of daily life, making it an easy, cost-effective and ‘normal’ choice in every community in England. The priorities of the framework are:
- Active society - Making physical activity part of the daily routine;

- Moving professionals - Thoughtful urban design, understanding land use patterns and creating transportation systems that promote walking and cycling will help to create active, healthier and more liveable communities; and
- Active environment - Creating the right spaces, including healthy environments to support health, recreation and wellbeing and encouraging people to use green space, playground and cycle lanes.

National Best Practice

Green Infrastructure Framework (Natural England)

- 4.10 The Green Infrastructure Framework (Available at: <https://naturalengland.blog.gov.uk/2025/02/03/green-infrastructure-the-catalyst-for-urban-greening/>) (Natural England, January 2023) comprises:
- GI Principles (what and how of good GI);
 - GI Standards (National standards for GI quantity and quality);
 - GI mapping including environmental and socio-economic datasets;
 - GI Planning and Design Guide; and
 - Process journeys.
- 4.11 Natural England states that GI:
- "Good quality GI has an important role to play in our urban and rural environments for improving health and wellbeing, air quality, nature recovery and resilience to and mitigation of climate change, along with addressing issues of social inequality and environmental decline."*
- 4.12 The guidance states that "GI strategies and policies can be used to support aspirations for a Nature Recovery Network (NRN), connecting across urban, urban-fringe, coastal and rural areas and enhancing landscape character."
- 4.13 Natural England has developed a set of 15 GI Principles which underpin the GI Framework. The Principles aim to provide a baseline for organisations to develop stronger GI policy and delivery. Principles cover why, what and how GI is achieved.
- 4.14 The Framework updates the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) to broaden their scope to Accessible Greenspace Standards. The headline standard is that everyone should have access to good quality green and blue spaces, with an initial focus of accessing these spaces within 15 minutes' walk from home.
- 4.15 Good provision is dependent on the size-proximity, capacity and quality criteria. The Accessible Greenspace Standards are:
- Within 15 minutes' walk either:
- A doorstep greenspace of at least 0.5ha within 200m; or

- A local natural greenspace of at least 2ha within 300m walk from home.
AND
- A medium sized neighbourhood natural greenspace (10ha) within 1km.
AND
- Beyond 15 minutes' walk:
A medium/large wider neighbourhood natural greenspace (20ha) within 2km;
and
A large district natural greenspace (100ha) within 5km; and
A very large subregional greenspace (500ha) within 10km.

Fields in Trust

- 4.16 Fields in Trust (FiT) is a national charity which formed in 1925 and aims to protect and safeguard outdoor space for sport and recreation. FiT provides guidance to practitioners on open space provision, including benchmark standards for the quantity and accessibility of open spaces.

Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard, 2020

- 4.17 The Guidance for Outdoor Sport Beyond the Six Acre Standard was updated in 2020 to reflect updated planning policy and to promote healthy communities. The document provides benchmark standards on the quantity, quality and accessibility for open spaces.

Creating Great Spaces for All, 2024

- 4.18 The 2024 standards supersede the 2015 Beyond the Six Acre Standard. The revised standards reflect a change in theme to support the path to net zero, nature recovery and greater social inclusion. The standards are split into Themes, Benchmarks, Case Studies and Design Process.

Local Strategy Documents

- 4.19 The following strategy documents provide an overview of the Council's strategic context and actions in relation to open space:
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority Corporate Plan (2022-2025);
 - Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Development Plan (2022-2039);
 - Manchester City Council Climate Change Framework (2020-2025);
 - Manchester City Council Design for Access 2 (2003);
 - Manchester City Council Residential Quality Guidance (2017);
 - Manchester City Council Year of the Child Survey (2022);

- Manchester City Council Play Satisfaction (2021);
- Manchester Local Plan (2012 to 2027) also Manchester Local plan Issues Consultation 2020;
- Manchester's Park Strategy (2017 - 2027);
- Manchester's Great Outdoors - A Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Manchester (2015-2025) (refreshed 2021);
- Manchester City Wide Open Spaces, Sport & Recreation Study (2009);
- Manchester Strategic Regeneration Frameworks;
- Manchester's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (2019–2028);
- Manchester's Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2031);
- Lower Irk Valley Neighbourhood Development Framework (2016);
- Our Manchester Strategy (2025-2035); and
- Our Rivers, Our City (2021-2030).

Population

Current Population

- 4.20 This Assessment uses Office for National Statistics (ONS) population data, including the 2018-based sub-national population, high migration data. Although more recent population data is available, it is considered inaccurate due to the high proportion of migration to the City.
- 4.21 Figure 3 shows the current (2026) population data taken from 2018-mid year estimates (ONS). The total population in 2026 is estimated at 576,564.
- 4.22 There is a higher proportion of 20–30-year-olds within Manchester than any other age group within the City. Population predictions estimate a 7.94% increase in population up to 2039 (see Table 4 for further information).

Table 4: Current population distribution by 5-year age bracket

Age Group	Population 2026
0-4	36,142
5-9	34,235
10-14	35,404
15-19	42,240
20-24	69,897
25-29	61,934
30-34	53,890

Age Group	Population 2026
35-39	44,275
40-44	35,279
45-49	29,762
50-54	26,256
55-59	26,504
60-64	23,727
65-69	18,612
70-74	13,888
75-79	11,158
80-84	6,847
85-89	4,133
90 and over	2,382

Population Density

- 4.23 Map 6 (ref: G10280.01.013) shows the population density (people per square kilometre) across the City. Owing to its urban location, student accommodation and areas of Victorian terraced streets, the Central and South sub-areas have some of the highest density of population. There are also areas within the North, and Wythenshawe sub-areas with over 8,500 people per square kilometre.

Deprivation

- 4.24 Map 7 (ref: G10280.01.011A) shows the Indices of Multiple Deprivation Decile (2025) and the rank of each Lower Super Output Area compared to others in England. Areas in Manchester are some of the Most Deprived across England.
- 4.25 When applying the Indices of Multiple Deprivation to Manchester only, there are higher levels of deprivation in the North, Central and Wythenshawe sub areas as shown in Map 8 (G10280.01.012A). Open spaces in these areas are often most impactful providing opportunities for physical recreation and improvements to health and wellbeing.

Future Population

- 4.26 Using the 2018 High Migration Variant, the projected future population for the City in 2039 is 626,325. All ages except for 10-14, 15-19, 35-39, and 60-64 years old are expected to increase. The largest estimated increase in population is in the 25–29-year age bracket.

Consultation

- 4.27 KKP and MCC undertook a consultation to gather evidence for an updated OSA to gather views of residents and key stakeholders across Manchester. Consultation was undertaken through:
- Key Stakeholder meetings;
 - Friends of Group surveys; and
 - A community questionnaire.
- 4.28 The aims of the OSA consultation were to:
- Provide key stakeholders across the City with information about the Open Space Study;
 - Allow key stakeholders and the local community to comment on the vision and approach to managing and developing open spaces within the City; and
 - Consider feedback received as a result of the consultation process.

Community Consultation

- 4.29 Community consultees were invited to answer a set of bespoke targeted questions related to the use and perception of open space in the City. Questions and a summary of responses are outlined in Appendix D.
- 4.30 A total of 1,023 responses were received to the questionnaire, including 965 (94%) respondents within Manchester. The largest responses were from Chorlton ward (12.5%), Ancoats and Beswick (7.3%) and Withington (6.5%).

Usage

- 4.31 Over 70% of respondents used local parks most often, and over 53.8% of respondents use Community Parks. Civic spaces are used the least (9%), followed by cemeteries and churchyards (14%).
- 4.32 Consultees were also asked how often each type of space was visited. Respondents who visited a local park include over 80% who visit the spaces at least weekly (31% daily, 50% weekly).
- 4.33 The second most frequently visited/used spaces were recreational routes (footpaths, cycleways and bridleways). Over 69% of respondents use these spaces on a weekly basis as a minimum.
- 4.34 Respondents were asked how long they spend at each type of space. Destination Parks, Allotments and Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspaces are generally where respondents stayed longer (e.g. over 2 hours or more).

Accessibility

- 4.35 Respondents travel to open spaces through a variety of methods however walking was the highest-ranking method of travel to local parks, provision for young children, amenity greenspace, community parks and allotments.
- 4.36 Respondents usually travel to Destination Parks and Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace by car likely owing to their location, or distance respondents were willing to travel to these spaces.

Use

- 4.37 Respondents were asked why they visit open spaces, with 86% of respondents visiting for fresh air, and 86% to go for a walk.
- 4.38 When reviewing barriers to visiting open space 76% of respondents noted the quality of open space as a factor, and 51.3% noted antisocial behaviour as a barrier.

Quality

- 4.39 When asked about the quality of open spaces across the City, 50% of respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. 24% of respondents were satisfied with the quality of open space across the City. 4% of respondents were very satisfied with the quality of open space across the City.

Quantity

- 4.40 When asked about the quantity of open spaces across the City, 31% of respondents were satisfied with the quantity of open space in the city, and 7% of respondents were very satisfied. 27% of respondents were dissatisfied, and 17% were very dissatisfied with the amount of open space.

Improvements

- 4.41 Respondents were asked what would improve open space across the City. Better maintenance achieved the highest response rate at 78.2%, followed by greater attractiveness (62%).

Stakeholder Meetings

- 4.42 Officers and Key Stakeholders were consulted as part of the OSA. Officers included MCC staff including neighbourhood officers, allotment officers and blue and green infrastructure managers.
- 4.43 Other key stakeholders included neighbouring authorities, local community groups and the Mersey Valley Trust.

Officer Consultation

- 4.44 Consultation raised that each sub-area presents its own unique challenges, and possible solutions for open space:
- North - there was considered to be growing pressure on open spaces for new houses and primary schools with the exception of Heaton Park and Boggart Hole Clough;
 - City Centre - there is less greenspace and open space should be maximised in the public realm; and
 - South - open space in this sub-area is sufficient owing to several key parks which are well supported by friends of groups (Alexandra Park, Platt Fields and Chorlton Park).
- 4.45 Generally, Officers noted that sites across the City require investment and several key sites were identified:
- Peter Pan Park;
 - Symmetry Park;
 - Mersey Bank Playing Fields; and
 - Crumpsall Park.
- 4.46 Officers recognised that key open spaces should be well connected through sustainable travel and ongoing efforts to provide new cycling infrastructure such as that at Wythenshawe Park will improve connectivity to local and national cycle routes.
- 4.47 Officers noted anti-social behaviour as a key issue across open spaces in the City, however suggestions were made to address this including providing sufficient new provision for young people (e.g. skate parks), and improving activity programme, including links to current groups for young people (e.g. Youth Zone in Harpurhey).
- 4.48 Officers understood new housing developments and the new open space provision being provided as part of these. Mayfield Park provides a good quality example of this which will provide open space provision between Piccadilly Station and the Mancunian Way.

Key Stakeholder Consultation

- 4.49 Several key themes were identified through consultation with Key Stakeholders including:
- Signage and wayfinding - consistent and appropriate signage should be provided across the City. The city centre was felt to be good, however there are other areas which lack good provision. Signage should be inclusive and designed to meet the needs of all.

- Access - open space should be provided for all abilities, including lighting, signage and pathways designed for all abilities as well as appropriate management of car parking and toilets. Pathways should be maintained as overgrown vegetation discourage use of open spaces.
 - Technology - This has the potential to support users of open space, for example, access to easy to find online information about open spaces helps users prepare for a visit. Assistive technology may also benefit users of open spaces, e.g. Navi Lens which can empower independent travel.
 - Deprivation - Manchester City has some of the poorest levels of health deprivation across England, and access to open spaces is critical in ensuring residents remain active.
 - Maximising blue infrastructure including the use of the three rivers of Medlock, Irwell and Mersey, and the canal network. Usage of these spaces should be maximised as in large they run through heavily urbanised areas. Maintenance should focus on infrastructure (benches, information boards and waymarking) and ensuring access for all users. Invasive Non-Native Species should be treated. Key future projects include a designated walking route from Heaton Park to the City Centre, better access to and across the Medlock, and improved safety of the canal network in and around the City Centre.
 - Cross-boundary provision - Consultation with Trafford Council noted that Longford Park is being improved using a £5m Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) fund.
- 4.50 MCC issued a survey to existing Friends of Groups within the City, the following Groups responded which range in size from 10 volunteers to over 100 members:
- Hulme Park;
 - Broadhurst Park;
 - St Georges Park;
 - Didsbury Park;
 - Hough End;
 - Alexandra Park;
 - Platt Fields;
 - Fletcher Moss Park and Parsonage Gardens;
 - Angel Meadows;
 - Ladybarn Park;
 - Chorlton Park;
 - Carisbrook Park;
 - Chorlton Meadows; and

- Whitworth Park.
- 4.51 Common activities undertaken by Friends of Groups include litter picking, gardening and maintenance of notice boards.
- 4.52 Larger groups such as Friends of Didsbury Park also complete nature walks and nature events. The St Georges Youth and Community Association provide events, such as a weekly Narcotics Anonymous session.
- 4.53 When asked what would help make better use of open spaces or the local area the following items were identified:
- Site specific improvements including new cycling or walking tracks, or areas for rewilding;
 - Designated social areas e.g. talking benches for those who are suffering from loneliness;
 - Funding to regenerate sites e.g. the Friends of Platt Fields requested funding to repurpose three old garages on site for a Men in Sheds programme.
- 4.54 Several common challenges were identified by the Groups including lack of communication with third parties, budgetary constraints, and difficulties in seeking approvals for events. Recruiting volunteers was also highlighted as a concern with all organisations.

5.0 Auditing Local Provision

Introduction

- 5.1 This section presents the results of the quantity, quality, value and accessibility assessment for the City as a whole, the sub-areas and each of the open space typologies.
- 5.2 Outdoor Sports Facilities (other than those which are multifunctional) are not included in the review of open spaces within the City, as these are considered as part of the Outdoor Sports and Playing Pitch Strategy.
- 5.3 Audits were undertaken by KKP and the results of the audits are summarised below.

City Overview

Quantity

- 5.4 The number, area and percentage of each type of open space within the City is shown in Table 5. The highest proportion of open space is provided by Parks and Gardens.
- 5.5 Civic spaces provide the least provision across the City (0.5%).

Table 5: Open Spaces by Typology, Number and Area

Open Space Typology	Description	No.	Area (ha)	Area (%)
Allotments and Community Gardens	Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.	43	56.24	2.93%

Open Space Typology	Description	No.	Area (ha)	Area (%)
Amenity Greenspace	Most commonly but not exclusively found in housing areas. Includes informal recreation green spaces and village greens (Note: Godfrey Ermen Playing Field received Village Green Status in 2018. Village Green status is a legal designation in England and Wales which protects land for community recreational use. A village green can be designated where it has been used openly for recreation (such as walking, games or picnicking), for at least 20 years.).	312	297.85	15.50%
Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	Cemeteries and churchyards including disused churchyards and other burial grounds.	109	158.12	8.23%
Civic Spaces	Hard surfaced areas usually located within town or city centres.	22	9.90	0.52%
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace	Includes country parks, nature reserves, publicly accessible woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands, wetlands and wastelands.	170	600.78	31.27%
Parks and Gardens	Includes urban parks and formal gardens. Parks usually contain a variety of facilities and may have one of more of the other types of open space within them.	98 (incl. 5 Strategic Parks)	776.29 (incl. 489.04 Strategic Parks)	40.40% (incl. 25.45% Strategic Parks)
Provision for Children and Young People	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, multi-use games areas and skateboard parks.	237	22.26	1.16%

Open Space Typology	Description	No.	Area (ha)	Area (%)
Total rounded to two decimal places		991	1921.44	100%

5.6 Table 6 shows the quantity of each typology by sub-area in ha.

Table 6: Ha of Open Space by Typology and Sub-area

Open Space Typology	North	Central	South	Wythenshawe
Allotments and Community Gardens	12.85	18.25	17.03	8.10
Amenity Greenspace	127.38	47.76	73.89	48.82
Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	72.21	18.20	60.84	6.87
Civic Spaces	1.12	8.78	0	0
Natural and Semi-Natural Areas Greenspace	287.73	75.69	121.96	115.40
Parks and Gardens	411.15 (incl. 325.37 Strategic Parks)	101.28	116.32 (incl. 56.23 Strategic Parks)	147.53 (incl. 107.43 Strategic Parks)
Provision for Children and Young People	7.79	6.12	4.50	3.85
Total rounded to two decimal places	920.23	276.09	394.55	330.58

5.7 Using the ONS 2018-based sub-national population, high migration estimates the current (2026) population for the City is 576,564 and the total amount of open space of 1,909.85 ha, current provision of open space is calculated at 3.33 ha per 1,000 population.

5.8 Using the projected future population figures it is also possible to calculate future provision. The area of each open space typology per 1,000 population (current and future) is shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Open Space Hectare per 1,000 population (current and future)

Open Space Typology	2026 ha/ 1,000	2039 ha/ 1,000
Allotments and Community Gardens	0.10	0.09
Amenity Greenspace	0.52	0.48
Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	0.27	0.25
Civic Spaces	0.02	0.02
Natural and Semi-Natural Areas Greenspace	1.04	0.96
Parks and Gardens	1.35	1.24
Provision for Children and Young People	0.04	0.04
Total rounded to two decimal places	3.33	3.07

Accessibility

- 5.9 The current accessibility standards are provided in Table 8 below. A review of accessibility for each of these typologies is included in Chapter 7.

Table 8: Walking and Driving Accessibility for Open Space Typologies

Open Space Typology	Existing Accessibility Standards (Taken from Core Strategy)
Allotments and Community Gardens	15 minute walk time (approx. 720m)
Amenity Greenspace	10 minute walk time (480m)
Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	N/A
Civic Spaces	N/A
Natural and Semi-Natural Areas Greenspace	15 minutes' walk time/ 720 metres City Centre - 15 minute drive time (public transport)
Parks and Gardens	City Parks (and city centre) - 15 minute public transport time Local Parks - 10 minute walk time (480m)
Provision for Children and Young People	Children - 10 minutes' walk time (480 metres) Young People 15 minutes' walk time (720m)

- 5.10 Maps 1-4 (G10280.01.004A, .005A, .006B and .007A) shows accessibility to Parks and Gardens, Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspaces, Amenity Greenspaces and Provision for Children and Young People mapped using accessibility standards

outlined by FiT's Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play Beyond the Six Acre Standard.

- 5.11 Accessibility thresholds have not been assigned to Civic Spaces as they are limited to a very small number of sites in urban areas. An accessibility threshold would not be appropriate due to the nature and use of these spaces.

Quality

- 5.12 A selection of sites were audited by KKP, and the scores have been included as part of this OSA. 447 sites had full quality audits as part of this OSA and the results are shown on map 9 (G10280.01.002B).
- 5.13 The range of scores from the quality audits of open spaces are provided in Table 8 and the quality score split by each typology audited is in Table 10.

Table 9: Open Space by Quality Score

Quality Score against Green Flag Award Criteria	Number of sites	% of Audit
Excellent	0	0%
Very Good	75	17%
Good	92	21%
Fair	188	42%
Poor	92	21%
Total	447	100%

Table 10: Quality Score for Open Space Typology

Open Space Typology	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Amenity Greenspace	0	4	10	18	14
Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	0	3	0	2	0
Civic Spaces	0	4	14	1	0
Natural and Semi-Natural Areas Greenspace	0	6	2	17	37
Parks and Gardens	0	9 (incl. 4 strategic parks)	22 (incl. 2 strategic parks)	55 (incl. 1 strategic parks)	6 (incl. 1 Strategic Park)

Open Space Typology	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Provision for Children and Young People	0	49	44	95	35
Total	0	75	92	188	92

Value

5.14 The range of value score from the audits of open space is shown at a City level on map 10 (G10280.01.003B) and results are broken down in Appendix C.

5.15 The range of value scores from the audits of open spaces are provided in Table 11 and the value scores for each typology are in Table 12.

Table 11: Open Spaces by Value Score

Value Score	Number of Sites	% of Audit
High	171	38%
Medium	175	39%
Low	101	23%
Total	447	100%

Table 12: Value Score for Open Space Typologies

Open Space Typology	High	Medium	Low
Amenity Greenspace	4	17	25
Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	1	3	1
Civic Spaces	18	1	0
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace	3	27	32
Parks and Gardens	36 (incl. 7 strategic parks)	37 (incl. 1 strategic park)	19
Provision for Children and Young People	109	90	24
Total	171	175	101

Key Finding on Quality and Value

- 5.16 Table 13 provides an overview of the range of quality and value scores achieved in the sites audits, and results are presented in Appendix C.
- 5.17 There were 91 sites that had a Quality score of Poor. The greatest range of quality score is within Amenity Greenspace typology.
- 5.18 The greatest Value scores range was for Parks and Gardens.

Table 13: Range of Quality and Value Score by Typology

Open Space Typology	Sites Audited	Range of Quality Scores	Range of Value Scores
Allotments and Community Gardens	n/a	n/a	n/a
Amenity Greenspace	46	9-79	7-73
Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	5	41-81	28-82
Civic Spaces	19	58-77	52-90
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace	62	13-82	12-82
Parks and Gardens	91 (incl. 8 strategic parks)	28-88	7-94
Provision for Children and Young People	223	16-88	12-90
Total	446	9-88	7-94

Allotments and Community Gardens

- 5.19 Allotments and community gardens provide opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.

Quantity

- 5.20 There are 43 sites providing 56.24 ha of Allotments and Community Gardens in the City, this equates to 0.10 ha per 1,000 population.
- 5.21 FiT's Guidance does not provide a national benchmark for Allotments and Community Gardens.
- 5.22 Standards are covered further in Chapter 7.

- 5.23 The largest Allotment and Community Gardens site is Levenshulme Allotment in the Central sub-area providing 5.02ha.

Quality and Value Assessment

- 5.24 Allotment and Community Gardens were not audited as part of the OSA due to the nature of the sites.

Accessibility Assessment

- 5.25 Allotment and Community Gardens have not been assigned an accessibility threshold, however sites have been mapped to assess the spatial distribution of this typology.
- 5.26 Map 11 Allotments Plan (G10280.01.008) shows that the distribution across the City and each of the four sub-areas is sparse.

Amenity Greenspace

- 5.27 Amenity Green Spaces are informal green spaces providing opportunities for informal recreation for residents and workers whilst enhancing the appearance of the area.

Quantity Assessment

- 5.28 There are 312 Amenity Greenspace sites providing 297.85 hectares of open space across the City which equates to 0.52 ha per 1,000 population. Several recreation grounds are classified as Amenity Greenspace.
- 5.29 FiT's Guidance provides a benchmark of 0.6 ha per 1,000 population.
- 5.30 Standards are covered further in Chapter 7.

Quality Assessment

- 5.31 Quality and Value scores for audited Amenity Green Spaces are summarised in Appendix C in order of their quality audit score and the results are also shown on Map 9 (G10280.01.002B).
- 5.32 46 Amenity Greenspace sites received a full quality audit by KKP.
- 5.33 The average quality score for Amenity Green Spaces is 49.48% which falls under the Fair Quality category as shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Quality Range for Amenity Greenspace

Average Score	Average Banding	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
49.48%	Fair	14	18	10	4	0

5.34 The lowest scoring Amenity Greenspaces are outlined below and achieved Poor quality due to maintenance issues, a lack of street furniture, and presence of vandalism.

- Mersey Meadows;
- Rochdale Canal; and
- Underwood Close.

Value Assessment

5.35 Value scores for audited Amenity Green Spaces are summarised in Appendix C in order of their quality audit score and the results are also shown on Map 10 (G10280.01.003B).

5.36 The average value score for Amenity Green Spaces is 38.89% which falls under the Low value category as shown in Table 15.

Table 15: Value Range for Amenity Greenspace

Average Score	Average Banding	Low	Medium	High
38.89%	Low	25	17	4

Accessibility Assessment

5.37 When applying the existing 480m buffer to Amenity Greenspaces, there is relatively good distribution to this typology across the City. Map 3 Open Space Accessibility - Amenity Greenspace Plan (G10280.01.006B.1-5) shows there are some small gaps in provision to this typology in each of the sub-areas, including around Manchester City Centre itself, Rusholme and Levenshulme, Didsbury, Northern Moor and to the south of the study area around Manchester airport, although it should be noted that the levels of population are significantly lower in this location.

Cemeteries and Burial Grounds

5.38 Cemeteries and Churchyards include disused churchyards and other burial grounds. There are 109 Cemeteries and Burial Grounds in the City providing 158.12 ha of open space.

Quantity Assessment

- 5.39 FiT's Guidance does not provide a national benchmark for Cemeteries and Burial Grounds.
- 5.40 Standards are covered further in Chapter 7.

Quality Assessment

- 5.41 5 Cemeteries and Churchyard sites were audited as part of the OSA.
- 5.42 Table 16 shows that the Cemeteries and Burial Grounds sites audited ranged in quality from Fair to Very Good. The average score for Churchyards and Burial Grounds was 65.52% which is categorised as Good.

Table 16: Quality Range for Cemeteries and Burial Grounds

Average Score	Average Banding	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
65.52%	Good	0	2	0	3	0

Value Assessment

- 5.43 Value scores for audited Cemeteries and Churchyards are summarised in Appendix C.
- 5.44 The average value score for Cemeteries and Churchyards is 56.22% which falls under the Medium value category as shown in Table 17.

Table 17: Value Range for Cemeteries and Churchyards

Average Score	Average Banding	Low	Medium	High
56.22%	Medium	1	3	1

Accessibility Assessment

- 5.45 FiT's Guidance does not provide a national benchmark for Cemeteries and Burial Grounds.
- 5.46 Standards are covered further in Chapter 7.

Civic Spaces

- 5.47 Civic Spaces are hard surfaced areas usually located within town or city centres.

Quantity Assessment

- 5.48 There are 22 sites classed as Civic Spaces in the City providing 9.90 ha of open space. This equates to a quantity provision of 0.02ha per 1,000 population.
- 5.49 FiT's Guidance does not provide a national benchmark for Civic Spaces and Market Squares.

Quality Assessment

- 5.50 The Civic Spaces which were audited for quality and value are listed in Appendix C in order of their quality audit score.
- 5.51 19 Civic Spaces received a full quality audit. Table 18 shows that the Civic Space sites audited were categorised as Fair to Very Good. The average score for Civic Spaces was 66.76% which is categorised as Good.

Table 18: Quality Range for Civic Spaces

Average Score	Average Banding	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
66.76%	Good	0	1	14	4	0

Value Assessment

- 5.52 Value scores for audited Civic Spaces are summarised in Appendix C in order of their quality audit score.
- 5.53 The average value score for Civic Spaces is 69.93% which falls under the High value category as shown in Table 19.

Table 19: Value Range for Civic Spaces

Average Score	Average Banding	Low	Medium	High
69.93%	High	0	1	18

Accessibility Assessment

- 5.54 There is no accessibility threshold for Civic Spaces. FiT's does not provide a national benchmark for Civic Spaces.
- 5.55 Standards are covered further in Chapter 7.

Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace

- 5.56 Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace includes country parks, nature reserves, publicly accessible woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands, wetlands and wastelands.

Quantity Assessment

- 5.57 There are 170 Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace sites providing 600.78 ha of open space which equates to 1.04 ha per 1,000.

Quality Assessment

- 5.58 The City's Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspaces are listed Appendix C in order of their quality, value scores are also shown. Quality audit scores are shown on Map 9 (G10280.01.002B).
- 5.59 62 Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace received a full quality audit. The average quality score for Natural and Semi-Natural Green Space is 40.15% which is categorised as fair, as shown in Table 20.

Table 20: Quality Range for Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace

Average Score	Average Banding	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
40.15%	Fair	37	17	2	6	0

Value Assessment

- 5.60 Value scores for audited Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspaces are summarised in Appendix C in order of their quality audit score.
- 5.61 The average value score for Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace is 38.99% which falls under the Low value category as shown in Table 21.

Table 21: Value Range for Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspaces

Average Score	Average Banding	Low	Medium	High
38.99%	Low	32	27	3

Accessibility Assessment

- 5.62 Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace has been assigned a walking accessibility threshold of 720m (15-minute walk).
- 5.63 Map 2 Open Space Accessibility - Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (G10280.01.005A) illustrates that there is good access to this typology in the North

and Wythenshawe sub-areas, however large areas of the Central and South areas have no accessible natural and semi-natural greenspace.

5.64 Additional analysis and information on standards is covered in Chapter 7.

Parks and Gardens

5.65 Parks and Gardens are generally multi-functional spaces, providing a range of facilities including landscaped gardens, playing fields, play areas and facilities for outdoor sport provision.

Quantity Assessment

5.66 There are 98 Parks and Gardens (including 5 strategic parks) providing 776.29 ha of open space across the City, which equates to 1.35 ha per 1,000 population.

5.67 There are 5 Strategic Parks which contribute to the total number of parks and gardens, providing 489ha of open space (0.85 ha per 1,000 population).

5.68 Standards are covered further in Chapter 7.

Quality Assessment

5.69 92 Parks and Gardens (including Strategic Parks) were audited, and the sites are listed in Appendix C in order of their quality, value scores are also shown.

5.70 The average quality score for all Parks and Gardens (inclusive of Strategic Parks) is 55.76% which is categorised as Fair Quality, as shown in Table 22. The Quality Scores for Strategic Parks and Gardens is provided at Table 23.

Table 22: Quality Score for all Parks and Gardens

Average Score	Average Banding	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
55.76%	Fair	6	55	22	9	0

Table 23: Quality Score for all Strategic Parks only

Average Score	Average Banding	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
67.84%	Good	1	1	2	4	0

Value Assessment

5.71 Value scores for audited Parks and Gardens are summarised in Appendix C.

5.72 The average value score for Parks and Gardens is 54.03% which falls under the Medium value category as shown in Table 24.

Table 24: Value Range for Parks and Gardens

Average Score	Average Banding	Low	Medium	High
54.03%	Medium	19	37	36

Accessibility Assessment

- 5.73 Parks and Gardens have been assigned a walking accessibility threshold of 710m (15-minute walk time).
- 5.74 Standards are covered further in Chapter 7.

Provision for Children and Young People

- 5.75 Provision for Children and Young People are areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, multi-use games areas and skateboard parks.

Quantity Assessment

- 5.76 There are 237 Provision for Children and Young People sites, providing 22.26 ha of Provision of Children and Young People which equates to 0.04 ha per 1,000 population.
- 5.77 Standards are covered further in Chapter 7.

Quality Assessment

- 5.78 223 Provision for Children and Young People sites were audited.
- 5.79 Quality scores for audited Provision for Children and Young People are summarised in Appendix C in order of their quality audit score. Value scores are also shown.
- 5.80 Table 25 shows that the average score for Provision for Children and Young People based on the site audits fall into the Fair banding.

Table 25: Quality range for Provision for Children and Young People

Average Score	Average Banding	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
55.56%	Fair	35	95	44	49	0

Value Assessment

- 5.81 Value scores for audited Provision for Children and Young People are summarised in Appendix C.

- 5.82 The average value score for Provision for Children and Young People is 59.66% which falls under the Medium value category as shown in Table 26.

Table 26: Value Range for Provision for Children and Young People

Average Score	Average Banding	Low	Medium	High
59.66%	Medium	24	90	109

Accessibility Assessment

- 5.83 FiT Guidance provides a range of benchmark standards dependent on the type of play provision:
- LAP - 100m
 - LEAP - 400m
 - NEAP - 1000m
 - Other (including MUGA) - 700m.
- 5.84 Map 4 Open Space Accessibility - Provision for Children and Young People Plan (G10280.01.007A) illustrates that there is coverage of play provision across the City, however there are large gaps in provision in LAP provision, and general play provision within the north hand south sub-areas.

6.0 Setting Standards

- 6.1 This OSA is in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) for Open Space, which have replaced Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation (2002) and its Companion Guide, Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A companion guide to Planning Policy Guidance 17 (2002).
- 6.2 Whilst the Companion Guide to Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 has been superseded, it is acknowledged that the principles and approach within the guidance have not been replaced and it is still relevant to apply the methodology to assess needs for open space provision.
- 6.3 Recommended standards of provision are based on local assessment and analysis and may be the same as a national recommended standard, if appropriate. Where current levels of provision do not meet a national recommended standard, this should be viewed as a minimum. Equally, the existing provision may already meet the future recommended standard and to lose it would significantly change the natural character of the area. By combining the existing level of provision with local views on its adequacy, it is possible to develop a range of new provision standards.

Manchester City Council Existing Standards

Quantity

- 6.4 Table 27 presents the existing standards for each open space typology.

Table 27: Existing Quantity Standards (ha per 1,000 Population)

Open Space Typology	Existing Standard (ha per 1,000 population) (Taken from Core strategy)
Allotments and Community Gardens	0.13
Amenity Greenspace	0.40
Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	None set
Civic Spaces	None set
Natural and Semi-Natural Areas Greenspace	1.86
Parks and Gardens- City Parks	0.20 (excludes Wythenshawe Park and Heaton Park)
Parks and Gardens- Local Parks	0.49
Provision for Children	0.0265
Provision for Young People	0.035

Accessibility

- 6.5 Appropriate distance thresholds for walking in a straight-line threshold as shown in Table 28.

Table 28: Existing Accessibility Standards

Open Space Typology	Existing Standard (ha per 1,000 population) (Taken from Core strategy)
Allotments and Community Gardens	15 minute walk time
Amenity Greenspace	10 minute walk time (480m)
Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	None set
Civic Spaces	None set
Natural and Semi-Natural Areas Greenspace	15 minute walk (720m) City Centre - 15 minute drive time (public transport)
Parks and Gardens- City Parks	15 minute public transport time City centre - 15 minute drive time (public transport)
Parks and Gardens- Local Parks	10 minute walk time (480m)
Provision for Children	10 minute walk time (480m)
Provision for Young People	15 minute walk time (720m)

- 6.6 Access to woodland has not been considered as a separate standard as part of this Strategy, however ANGSt has been considered (see benchmark standards below). In addition, tree planting and access to woodland will be supported in the recommendations.

Benchmark Standards

- 6.7 National Benchmark Standards are from the Creating Great Spaces for All (2024) which supersedes the Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard (2015). Beyond the Six Acre Standard guidance reflects the NPPF, The Localism Act 2011 and the phased introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The guidance draws out new recommendations for accessibility and, alongside formal open space such as sports pitches and play areas, introduces benchmarking for informal open space (e.g. Amenity Green Space and Natural Green Space sites). The latest guidance has been informed by a survey commissioned by FiT in 2014 resulting in a response from 119 local authorities in England and Wales, representing a total response rate of 33%.
- 6.8 The revised FiT Creating Great Spaces for all sets minimum quantitative provision standards for Parks and Gardens, Amenity Greenspace, Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace and Play. It also recommends total open space provision as a

minimum of 3.2 hectares per 1,000 people, total play space minimum of 0.55 hectares per 1,000 people (inclusive of formal and informal play). An overall total minimum of 5.35 hectares per 1,000 population is set, inclusive of all open space, play space and outdoor sports. This Assessment excludes specific sport provision which is covered in other studies e.g. the Manchester Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy.

- 6.9 In 1996, English Nature (now Natural England) produced recommendations for the provision of accessible natural green space, this is often referred to as the ANGSt model.
- 6.10 According to the ANGSt model, a natural green space is defined by the level of management or other forms of disturbance, and accessibility is the ability of visitors to physically gain access to a site.
- 6.11 Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework - Principles and Standards (2023) has updated the scope of the ANGSt model, originally published in 1996. These standards are now called Accessible Greenspace Standards and include all publicly accessible green and natural spaces. The Accessible Greenspace Standards focus on access to green and blue spaces within 15 minutes' walk from home and define good provision based on different size-proximity, capacity, and quality criteria set out below:

Size Proximity Criteria

- 6.12 Within 15 minutes' walk, EITHER a Doorstep OR Local Accessible Greenspace
- A doorstep greenspace of at least 0.5ha within 200 metres, or
 - A local natural greenspace of at least 2ha within 300 metres walk from home.
- AND
- A medium sized neighbourhood natural greenspace (10ha) within 1km.
- AND, beyond 15 minutes' walk:
- A medium/large wider neighbourhood natural greenspace (20ha) within 2km. and
 - And large district natural greenspace (100ha) within 5-km. and
 - A very large subregional greenspace within (500 ha) within 10 km.

Capacity Criteria

- 6.13 A Capacity standard of at least 3 ha accessible greenspace per 1,000 population, measured at district /borough/ unitary authority-wide scale.

Quality Criteria

- 6.14 The Accessible Greenspace Standards Quality Criteria recommend that accessible greenspace meets the Green Flag Award Criteria, as well as the Access for All criteria based on the principle of inclusive access, and best practice guidance set out in 'By All Reasonable Means – Least restrictive access to the outdoors'.
- 6.15 The Woodland Trust's Woodland Access Standard aspires to the following guidelines:
- no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 2 ha in size; and
 - there should be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20 ha within 4km (8km round trip) of people's homes.

Additional Information on Allotment Standards

- 6.16 There is no legal national minimum quantity provision standard for allotments (Available at: <http://www.allotmoreallotments.org.uk/legislation.htm>).
- 6.17 The 1969 Thorpe Report recommended a minimum provision equivalent to 15 plots per 1,000 households (Note: Average Household size in England & Wales is 2.3 (2011 Census), which equates to 6.5 plots per 1,000 population or 0.16 ha per 1,000 population).
- 6.18 The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) recommends a minimum level of provision of 20 allotment plots (Note: Based on a standard plot of 250 m²) per 1,000 households, which equates to 8.7 plots per 1,000 population or 0.21 ha per 1,000 population. NSALG advises that the standard plot size is 250 sq. metres.
- 6.19 A Review of Allotment Provision for Cambridge City Council (Note: Review of Allotment Provision for Cambridge City Council (Ashley Godfrey Associates, January 2010), stated that there is difficulty in considering a standard of provision based on household given the trend of falling household size since the 1950s. The report referenced the Survey of Allotments, Community Gardens and City Farms, carried out by the University of Derby on behalf of Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in 2006, which showed that the national average provision was 7 plots per 1,000 population, which equates to 0.175 ha per 1,000 population.
- 6.20 In the FiT Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play Review, Phase 2 Survey Findings for England and Wales (2014), the median level of provision for allotments, community gardens and urban farms was 0.3 ha per 1,000 population.
- 6.21 A summary of national benchmark standards for allotments is provided in Table 29.

Table 29: Summary of National Benchmark Standards for Allotments

Report	No. of households	No. of Allotment plots per 1,000 household	Population (based on household size of 2.3)	Hectare (based on plot size of 250m ²)
Thorpe Report 1969	1,000	15	2,300	0.375
Thorpe Report 1969	-	6.5	1,000	0.16
NSALG	1,000	20	2,300	0.5
NSALG	-	8.7	1,000	0.21
University of Derby	-	7	1,000	0.175
University of Derby	-	-	1,000	0.3

Proposed Standards

Quantity

- 6.22 The proposed quantity standards are based on a review of the existing quantity provision in Manchester. The context of open space provision in the City is a strong consideration in setting standards, since the standards should be locally derived based on supply and demand; as well as consideration of the differing nature of the sub-areas across the city.
- 6.23 These considerations lean towards protecting the existing amount of open space through setting standards which align with existing provision, rather than standards which require the provision of more open space, which may be less achievable due to land constraints and funding required to implement new open space.

Allotments

- 6.24 The proposed standard is aligned to the existing provision at 0.10 ha per 1,000 population. There is no FiT benchmark standard for Allotments.
- 6.25 See Table 29 for further information on benchmark Allotment standards.

Amenity Greenspace

- 6.26 The proposed standard is aligned to the existing provision at 0.52 ha per 1,000. This is slightly lower than the FiT standard of 0.6 ha per 1,000 population however new amenity greenspace provision could be provided as part of new development.

Cemeteries and Burial Grounds

- 6.27 No standard is proposed for this typology. There is no FiT benchmark standard because Cemeteries and Burial Ground provision cannot be quantified in this way as their provision is not led by the need for open space and recreation, even though it is acknowledged that they contribute to the overall open space provision of an area.
- 6.28 The standard for Cemeteries and Burial Grounds is based on demand for burial space rather than hectarage of land.
- 6.29 Cemeteries and burial grounds analysis is based on the size (hectares) of the site. Analysis of this typology does not consider the capacity of the sites or death rates which would be covered in the Cemeteries and Burial Strategy.

Civic Space

- 6.30 The proposed standard for Civic Space is aligned to the existing provision at 0.02 ha per 1,000 population, there is no FiT Benchmark Standard for Civic Space. This standard leans to retaining existing Civic spaces.

Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace

- 6.31 The proposed standard is aligned to existing provision of 1.04 ha per 1,000 population for the City as a whole. The FiT benchmark for Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace is 1.80 hectares per 1,000 population, however this is unlikely to be achieved in the City due to its urban nature.

Parks and Gardens

- 6.32 The proposed standard is aligned to existing provision of 1.35 ha per 1,000 population. This exceeds the FiT benchmark standard of 0.80 ha per 1,000 population and in part is due to the number of larger Strategic Parks across the city including Heaton Park.

Provision for Children and Young People

- 6.33 The proposed standard is aligned to existing provision 0.04 ha per 1,000 population. This is well below the FiT guidance of 0.25 ha per 1,000 population, however new play provision could be provided on existing sites to enhance the value and function provided.

Table 30: Proposed Quantity Standards for Manchester

Open Space Typology	Existing Provision (ha/1,000)	National Benchmark	Existing Standard (ha/1,000)	Proposed Standard (ha/1,000)
Allotments and Community Gardens	0.10	No Standard	0.13	0.10
Amenity Greenspace	0.52	0.60	0.40	0.52
Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	0.27	No Standard	No Standard	No Standard
Civic Spaces	0.02	No Standard	No Standard	0.02
Natural and Semi-Natural Areas Greenspace	1.04	1.80	1.86	1.04
Parks and Gardens	1.35 (incl. 0.85 strategic parks)	0.80	0.20 - city parks 0.49 - Local Parks	1.35
Provision for Children and Young People	0.04	0.25	0.027 - Children 0.03 - Young People	0.04

- 6.34 Whilst some of the proposed standards are lower than the benchmark standards, these could be addressed by increasing the multi-functionality of other existing open spaces. As an example heavily maintained sites could adapt the existing maintenance regime to create a more natural environment which could contribute to the provision of natural and semi-natural open spaces.

Surplus and Deficiencies by Quantity Standard

- 6.35 Table 31 compares the existing quantity provision against the proposed quantity standard for Manchester to show the future surplus and deficiency for the forecasted population at 2039.

Table 31: Future Quantity Provision against the Proposed Quantity Standard

Open Space Typology	Existing Provision (ha/1,000)	Proposed Standard (ha/1,000)	2039 Surplus/Deficiency (ha/1,000)
Allotments and Community Gardens	0.10	0.10	-0.01

Open Space Typology	Existing Provision (ha/1,000)	Proposed Standard (ha/1,000)	2039 Surplus/Deficiency (ha/1,000)
Amenity Greenspace	0.52	0.52	-0.04
Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	0.27	No Standard	No Standard
Civic Spaces	0.02	0.02	-0.001
Natural and Semi-Natural Areas Greenspace	1.04	1.04	-0.08
Parks and Gardens	1.35	1.35	-0.11
Provision for Children and Young People	0.04	0.04	-0.003
Total rounded to two decimal places	3.33	3.06	-0.26

Accessibility

- 6.36 Revised accessibility standards are proposed based on a review of baseline data, consultation and national benchmark standards. These are summarised in Table 32.

Table 32: Existing Accessibility Standards

Open Space Typology	National Benchmark Standard (taken from FiT Beyond the Six Acre Standard)	Proposed Accessibility Standard
Allotments and Community Gardens	No Standard	No Standard
Amenity Greenspace	480 metres (10 mins walk)	480 metres (10 mins walk)
Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	No Standard	No Standard
Civic Spaces	No Standard	No Standard
Natural and Semi-Natural Areas Greenspace	720 metres (10 mins walk)	720 metres (15 mins walk)
Parks and Gardens	710 metres (15 mins walk)	710 metres (15 mins walk)
Provision for Children and Young People	LAP - 100m (2-3 mins walk) LEAP - 400m (20 mins walk) NEAP - 1000m (20 mins walk)	LAP - 100m (2-3 mins walk) LEAP - 400m (20 mins walk)

Open Space Typology	National Benchmark Standard (taken from FiT Beyond the Six Acre Standard)	Proposed Accessibility Standard
	Other - 700m	NEAP - 1000m (20 mins walk) Other - 700m

Quality

6.37 The proposed quality standard for open space across Manchester provides a local quality standard. The proposed bandings for the quality are:

- Excellent - 90% to 100%
- Very Good - 70% to 89%
- Good - 60% to 69%
- Fair - 40% to 59%
- Poor - 0% to 39%

The proposed quality standard of 60% ensures that all sites achieve at least a Good quality score.

6.38 The national benchmark standard for quality is set out in Table 33.

Table 33: Proposed Quality Standard

Open Space Typology	National Benchmark Standard
Parks and Gardens	Parks to be of Very Good quality. Appropriately landscaped. Positive management. Provision of footpaths. Designed to be free of the fear of harm or crime.
Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace should be Good as per above. Appropriately landscaped. Positive management. Provision of footpaths. Designed to be free of the fear of harm or crime.
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace	Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace should be Good as per above. Appropriately landscaped. Positive management. Provision of footpaths. Designed to be free of the fear of harm or crime.

Open Space Typology	National Benchmark Standard
Allotments and Community Gardens	No standard in the guidance, but it can be assumed the same standards as above apply to other types of green space.
Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	No standard in the guidance, but it can be assumed the same standards as above apply to other types of green space.
Civic Space	No standard in the guidance, but it can be assumed the same standards as above apply to other types of green space.
Provision for Children and Young People	Quality appropriate to the intended level of performance, designed to appropriate technical standards. Located where they are of most value to the community to be served.

Value

6.39 The proposed value standard for open spaces in Manchester is based on 'Assessing needs and opportunities: a companion guide to PPG17 (September 2002).

6.40 The bandings for the open space value audits are as follows:

- High - 60 to 100%
- Medium - 40 to 59%
- Low - 0 to 39%

The proposed Value Standard of 40% ensures that all sites achieve a Medium value score.

6.41 Adding value to open space is very important as it enables them to provide more ecosystem services and the benefits that can be derived from them. Value can be added in a multitude of ways to draw out their contextual, heritage, local amenity/ sense of place, recreation, play and ecological value.

7.0 Applying Standards

- 7.1 This Chapter analyses the open space provision in each of the 4 sub-areas across the City. This includes details on each open space typology, including quantity, quality and accessibility. Considering the existing provision against the individual characteristics of each sub-area, including the socio-economic factors, will help inform the most appropriate means of future open space provision. Whilst analysis at a sub-area level provides a level of detail to help decision making, it is not the intention that each sub-area should have equal provision due to differences in population.
- 7.2 Tables in each section provide a breakdown of open space provision by sub-area as well as where the proposed open space quantity standards are being met. Additional commentary is provided about whether there is access to open space, as quantity should not be considered as the only measure of provision, particularly at a sub-area level as people access open spaces regardless of the geographical sub-area boundaries.
- 7.3 Open space data was provided by the Council at the outset of the project. Analysis in this Assessment is based on a snapshot in time. This assessment accounts for a forecasted population increase of 7.94% between 2026 - 2039 based on ONS based subnational population, high migrant variant data.

Quantity

Natural England Capacity Standard

- 7.4 The Natural England GI Framework set a standard of at least 3 hectares of publicly accessible greenspace per 1,000 population. Accessible Natural Greenspace is defined (Available at: [Accessible Greenspace Standard User Guide](#)) as:
- Public parks and gardens;
 - Country Parks;
 - Doorstep Greens;
 - Millennium Greens;
 - Open Access Land;
 - Local Nature Reserves; and
 - Playing Fields (within the Doorstep Greenspace criterion only).
- 7.5 Within Manchester assessment against Amenity Greenspace, Parks and Gardens and Natural and Semi-Natural spaces demonstrates a current provision of 2.91 hectares per 1,000 population, and future provision of 2.67 hectares per 1,000 population, both falling short of the proposed standard.

- 7.6 Open Spaces within Manchester are distinct and multi-functional, as such a number of larger strategic cemeteries and churchyards are used as wider accessible greenspace, including the Green Flag Award Southern Cemetery site, which is also a Local Nature Reserve. When assessing provision including the five largest cemeteries (Note: Manchester Southern Cemetery, Blackley Cemetery, Philips Park Cemetery, St Joseph's Roman Cemetery and Gorton Cemetery), there is a current provision of 3.11 hectares per 1,000 population meeting the standard. However looking forward to 2039 future provision is at 2.86 hectares per 1,000 population.
- 7.7 New open space provision is expected to come forward as part of large scale growth allocations within the local plan which will reduce the forecasted deficit. These areas were largely excluded from the baseline calculations as they are located within SHLAA sites.

FiT Creating Great Spaces for All

- 7.8 The updated FiT Guidance provides typology specific quantitative standards, and recommends total open space provision as a minimum of 3.2ha per 1,000 population. Play spaces (both equipped designated play and informal play) is set at 0.55 hectares per 1,000 provision. The overall total of play and open space provision when combined is at 3.75 hectares per 1,000 population.
- 7.9 Standards are also set for total Outdoor Sports Provision, however are not considered in this Assessment as they are covered in a separate Study.
- 7.10 The total of open space provision (Amenity Greenspace, Natural and Semi-Natural and Parks and Gardens) is 1,674.92 hectares, and formal play provision provides 22.26 hectares. Combined the total provision is at 1,697.18 hectares which when assessed against population provides 2.94 hectares per 1,000 population, below the overall combined standard. However this figure does not account for informal play.
- 7.11 When including multi-functional larger cemeteries and churchyards, the total provision is at 3.15 hectares which remains below the overall combined standard for open space and play provision from the FiT Guidance.

North Sub-Area

Sub-Area Analysis

- 7.12 The North Sub-Area has the most open space both in terms of number of sites and total hectareage. There are 396 open spaces in the north sub-area providing 920.23 hectares of open space.
- 7.13 Map 5 (G10280.01.001C.2) shows open space typologies across the sub-area, there is provision of all typologies across the North sub-area. Parks and Gardens

provide the largest amount of open space provision in the sub-area when assessing the total hectareage of each typology.

7.14 Table 34 shows a breakdown of typologies in the sub-area.

Table 34: North sub-area Open Space Provision by Typology

Open Space Typology	Number of open spaces	Existing Provision (ha)	Proposed Standard (ha/1,000)
Allotments and Community Gardens	12	12.85	0.10
Amenity Greenspace	140	127.38	0.52
Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	40	72.21	No standard
Civic Spaces	4	1.12	0.02
Natural and Semi-Natural Areas Greenspace	69	287.73	1.04
Parks and Gardens	31(incl.2 strategic parks)	411.15 (incl. 325.37 ha strategic parks)	1.35
Provision for Children and Young People	100	7.79	0.04
Total	396	920.23	-

Accessibility Analysis

- 7.15 The north sub-area has good accessibility to Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace and Amenity Greenspace. There is some provision of accessible Parks and Gardens, however there are gaps to the Moston and Charlestown areas of this sub-area.
- 7.16 There is little access to play provision across a large proportion of the north sub-area particularly for LAP and LEAP provision. Harpurhey, Moston and Charlestown have limited access to any formal play provision.
- 7.17 Access to all play space provision (including other e.g. MUGA's) is generally good across the north sub-area.
- 7.18 No accessibility standard has been set for Allotments and Community Gardens however map 11 (G10280.01.008) shows the spatial distribution of these sites in the sub-area. Provision of this typology is sparse across the north sub-area, with large gaps in provision towards the centre of Manchester.

Quality Analysis

- 7.19 Map 9 (G10280.01.002B) shows each open space and the Quality score from the open space audits.
- 7.20 177 sites were audited in the North sub-area and scores ranged from Poor to Very Good. Heaton Park achieved the highest quality score in the sub-area of 87.1% (Very Good Quality). Kirkhaven Square Play area achieved the second highest quality score in the sub-area of 82.5%.
- 7.21 Andrew Road MUGA, provision for children and young people ranked lowest quality in the sub-area with 16.5% (Poor Quality). Details of these sites can be found in Appendix C.

Value Analysis

- 7.22 Map 10 (G10280.01.003B) shows each open space and the Value score from the open space audits.
- 7.23 Audited sites in the North sub-area ranged from Low to High Value. The highest value sites were NEAP play areas of Heaton Park Play Area 2, and Heaton Park Play Area 3 achieving a value score of 90.9%. Rochdale Canal Amenity Greenspace scored lowest value in the sub-area at 7.1%. Details of audit results can be found in Appendix C.

Central Sub-Area

Sub-Area Analysis

- 7.24 The Central Manchester Sub-Area includes Manchester City Centre, Hulme, Longsight, Rusholme and Levenshulme.
- 7.25 There are 240 open spaces in the sub-area providing 276.09 ha of open space. The Central sub-area has the least amount of open space provision in terms of hectareage.
- 7.26 Map 5 (G10280.01.001C.2) shows open space typologies across the sub-area. There is provision of all typologies across the sub-area, however there are no Strategic Parks within the central sub-area itself. Parks and Gardens provide the largest hectareage of open space across the central sub-area.
- 7.27 Table 35 shows a breakdown of current provision by typology.

Table 35: Central sub-area Open Space Provision by Typology

Open Space Typology	Number of open spaces	Existing Provision (ha)	Proposed Standard (ha/1,000)
Allotments and Community Gardens	12	18.25	0.10
Amenity Greenspace	66	47.76	0.52
Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	25	18.20	No Standard
Civic Spaces	18	8.78	0.02
Natural and Semi-Natural Areas Greenspace	20	75.69	1.04
Parks and Gardens	40	101.28	1.35
Provision for Children and Young People	59	6.12	0.04
Total	240	276.09	-

Accessibility Analysis

- 7.28 The central sub-area has good accessibility to Parks and Gardens and Play Provision. Whilst there is no specific Strategic Park within the sub-area, there is access to this typology within 710m from Alexandra Park and Platt Fields Park which are in the south sub-area.
- 7.29 There are gaps in the provision of natural and semi-natural greenspace particularly around Hulme, Moss Side and around the universities.
- 7.30 There are some gaps in access to Amenity Greenspaces around Levenshulme and Castlefield areas.
- 7.31 Although there is no accessibility standard set for Allotments and Community Gardens, Map 11 (G10280.01.008.3) shows the spatial distribution of this typology. Provision is only in the east and south of this sub-area with no Allotment sites at northern and western parts of the sub-area.

Quality Analysis

- 7.32 Map 9 (G10280.01.002B) shows each open space and the Quality score from the open space audits.
- 7.33 118 open spaces were audited in the central sub-area and scores ranged from Poor to Very Good. The highest scoring sites in the central sub-area were Mayfield Park play area (88.7%) and Glenbarry Close Play Area (80.8%) both achieving Very Good quality scores.

- 7.34 Underwood Close NSN Amenity Greenspace, and Secret Lake Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace scored the lowest quality at 18.3% and 23.3% (poor quality) respectively. Details of these sites can be found in Appendix C.

Value Analysis

- 7.35 Map 10 (G10280.01.003B) shows each open space and the Value score from the open space audits.
- 7.36 Audited sites ranged from Low to High Value. 39 sites achieved a High value score, including St Peter's Square Civic space, King George V Playing Field Play Area, and Mayfield Park Play Area which all achieved a High Value score of 90.9%.
- 7.37 Brynton Road Garden Park and Garden achieved the lowest value score at 7.4% (Low). Details of audit results can be found in Appendix C.

South Sub-Area

Sub-Area Analysis

- 7.38 The South Sub-Area includes Whalley Range, Fallowfield, Chorlton-cum-hardy, Didsbury, East Didsbury and West Didsbury.
- 7.39 There are 161 open spaces in the sub-area providing 394.55 hectares of open space. There are no Civic Spaces in this sub-area.
- 7.40 Map 5 (G10280.01.001C.3) shows open space typologies across the south sub-area. Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace sites provide the highest proportion of open space provision in the South sub-area in terms of hectareage.
- 7.41 Table 36 shows a breakdown of current provision by typology in the sub-area.

Table 36: South sub-area Open Space Provision by Typology

Open Space Typology	Number of open spaces	Existing Provision (ha)	Proposed Standard (ha/1,000)
Allotments and Community Gardens	12	17.03	0.10
Amenity Greenspace	46	73.89	0.52
Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	27	60.84	No Standard
Civic Spaces	0	0.00	0.02
Natural and Semi-Natural Areas Greenspace	22	121.96	1.04

Open Space Typology	Number of open spaces	Existing Provision (ha)	Proposed Standard (ha/1,000)
Parks and Gardens	14 (incl. 2 strategic parks)	116.32 (incl. 56.23 strategic parks)	1.35
Provision for Children and Young People	40	4.50	0.04
Total	161	394.55	-

Accessibility Analysis

- 7.42 The south sub-area has some accessible parks and gardens provision, however there are gaps in provision in the wards of Whalley Range and at Chorlton Park.
- 7.43 There are also gaps in provision to Amenity Greenspace at Didsbury, Whalley Range and some areas of Withington.
- 7.44 There is limited access to LAP and LEAP play provision across the sub-area, and when reviewing all types of accessible play provision there is no access to play provision in some areas of Didsbury, Chorlton and Whalley Range.
- 7.45 Access to Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace is generally good to the south of this sub-area however there is no access to this typology in some areas of Whalley Range, Withington and Didsbury.
- 7.46 Whilst Allotments and Community Gardens have no accessibility standard set, the spaces are shown in Map 11 (G10280.01.008.4). Allotments are identified throughout the sub-area, except to the east around Burnage and Didsbury.

Quality Analysis

- 7.47 Map 9 (G10280.01.002B) shows each open space and the Quality score from the open space audits.
- 7.48 77 open spaces were audited in the sub-area, sites fell in each of the quality bandings. 14 sites achieved a Very Good quality score, including Alexandra Park at 88%. Mersey Meadows Amenity Greenspace was the lowest scoring site in the sub-area (9.7% Poor Quality). Details of these sites can be found in Appendix C.

Value Analysis

- 7.49 Map 10 (G10280.01.003B) shows each open space and the Value score from the open space audits.

- 7.50 Of the 77 sites audited, 30 sites achieved a High Value score, 32 sites a Medium Value score and the remaining 15 sites achieved a Low Value score. The Highest Value site was Alexandra Park (90.5%), Mersey Meadows achieved the lowest value score at 7.1%. Details of audit results can be found in Appendix C.

Wythenshawe Sub area

Sub-Area Analysis

- 7.51 The Wythenshawe Sub-Area is to the far south of the study-area and comprises Baguley, Northenden, Newall Green and the area around Manchester airport.
- 7.52 There are 194 open spaces in the sub-area providing 330.58ha of open space. There are no Civic Spaces in this sub-area.
- 7.53 Map 5, G10280.01.001C shows open space typologies across the sub-area. Parks and Gardens provide the highest open space provision across the sub-area in terms of hectareage.
- 7.54 Table 37 shows a breakdown of current provision by typology in the sub-area

Table 37: Wythenshawe Open Space Provision by Typology

Open Space Typology	Number of open spaces	Existing Provision (ha)	Proposed Standard (ha/1,000)
Allotments and Community Gardens	7	8.10	0.10
Amenity Greenspace	60	48.82	0.52
Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	17	6.87	No Standard
Civic Spaces	0	0.00	0.02
Natural and Semi-Natural Areas Greenspace	59	115.40	1.04
Parks and Gardens	13 (incl. 1 strategic park)	147.53 (incl. 107.43 strategic parks)	1.35
Provision for Children and Young People	38	3.85	0.04
Total	194	330.58	-

Accessibility Analysis

- 7.55 The Wythenshawe sub-area has some access to Parks and Gardens however there are gaps in provision at Northenden. Access to Amenity Greenspaces is generally good, although there are small areas lacking access to this typology in Northern

Moor and Sharston. Apparent gaps in provision at the very south of Manchester are due to the location of Manchester Airport, with very limited housing.

- 7.56 Access to Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace in the sub-area is very good, with only small gaps in provision at Baguley.
- 7.57 There is little access to LAP and LEAP play provision across the sub-area particularly at Northern Moor, Northenden, Baguley and Benchill.
- 7.58 There are seven Allotment and Community Garden sites in the Wythenshawe Sub-area and there are large gaps in provision of this typology to the centre and east of the sub-area.

Quality Analysis

- 7.59 Map 9 (G10280.01.002B) shows each open space and the Quality score from the open space audits.
- 7.60 79 sites were audited in the sub-area. 23 sites scored Poor quality, 34 sites scored Fair quality, 12 sites scored Good quality and 10 sites Very Good quality. There were no Excellent quality sites in Wythenshawe. Details of these sites can be found in Appendix C.
- 7.61 The highest quality sites were Peel Hall Park play area (78% - Very Good) and Baguley Park play area (77.3% Very Good).
- 7.62 Simonsway Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace achieved the lowest quality score of 13.6% (Poor Quality).

Value Analysis

- 7.63 Map 10 (G10280.01.003B) shows each open space and the Value score from the open space audits.
- 7.64 Of the 79 sites audited 40 sites ranked High Value, 20 sites Medium value and 19 sites Low Value. Princess Parkway Park, and Wythenshawe Park scored the highest Value at 94.7% (High Value). Details of audit results can be found in Appendix C.

8.0 Recommendations and Strategy

Adopt the Recommended Standards

- 8.1 This OSA is in line with the NPPF (2024) and PPG for Open Space, which have replaced PPG 17: Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation (2002) and its Companion Guide, Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A companion guide to PPG 17 (2002). Whilst the Companion Guide to PPG17 has been superseded, the principles and approach within this guidance have not been replaced and remain relevant.
- 8.2 This OSA has reviewed local open space provision within Manchester, including the quantity, accessibility, quality and value.
- 8.3 This OSA has resulted in recommendations for standards which are robust and can form a basis for addressing any deficiencies resulting from proposed development and population increase.
- 8.4 It is recommended that the proposed standards are adopted by the Council to support the delivery and implementation of Local Plan policies to 2039.

Standards and New Development

- 8.5 Appropriately designed and multi-functional open space is essential to provide recreational opportunities, help tackle climate change, create flood risk resilience, reverse biodiversity decline and provide many health and wellbeing benefits for the immediate and wider community. Furthermore, new development is required to provide measurable net gain for biodiversity under the NPPF (paragraph 187) and the Natural Environment PPG.
- 8.6 The results of this OSA should be used to identify which typology(ies) should be included as part of new development. Due to the urban nature of the City, and limited land availability the emphasis is on retention and increase in quality and value of existing spaces. An example Assessment Process for Open Space is provided at Appendix E.
- 8.7 Funding through planning obligations should be used to improve the quality of open space such as Provision for Children and Young People, as well as improving walking and cycling accessibility to open spaces through provision of improved cycleways and recreation routes and connectivity.

Open Space Guidance Documents

- 8.8 A guidance document could be published to outline the open space requirements of new developments to:

- protect, replace or enhance open spaces impacted by development proposals;
- Implement standards proposed in this OSA; and
- Review local open space provision in regard to the increase in population.

8.9 The guidance document could include a broad design guide related to open spaces.

Multi-Functional Open Space

8.10 Wherever possible, the Council should look to open spaces to deliver multiple functions, including:

- Recreation;
- Green travel route;
- Aesthetic;
- Shading from the sun;
- Evaporative cooling;
- Trapping air pollutants;
- Noise absorption;
- Habitat for wildlife;
- Connectivity for wildlife;
- Heritage;
- Cultural;
- Carbon storage;
- Food production;
- Wind shelter;
- Education;
- Water storage;
- Water infiltration; and
- Water interception.

Long-Term Management of Open Spaces for New Development

Application of Standards

8.11 It is recommended that the proposed standards are adopted as policy, as part of the updated Local Plan. New development should use the standards outlined in this document to integrate well designed, quality open space which are accessible for all

communities, taking into consideration different age groups, abilities, ethnicities and gender.

- 8.12 Any SHLAA or Employment Site which is currently considered open space should be assessed on an individual basis as part of the planning application for that site.
- 8.13 The standards set out in the OSA will provide the baseline for assessing any potential shortfall or surplus as a result of proposed development.

Management of Open Space

- 8.14 Once development has been granted planning permission, implemented on the site and practical completion has been achieved, the open space on site is usually either transferred to the Council or managing organisation (e.g. third-party Management Company, or resident led Management Company).
- 8.15 It is recommended that a Landscape Management Plan (or combined Habitat and Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan where Biodiversity Net Gain is considered) is required for the long-term management of open space and should be produced prior to the transfer of open space. A Landscape Management Plan should provide the following minimum information:
 - Desktop review of the site including context, designations and history;
 - Site specific information including ecology, arboriculture and public rights of way;
 - Aims and objective for the management of the Site;
 - Management organisation who will be responsible for the open space post-practical completion;
 - Funding of long-term maintenance of the Site; and
 - Procedure of review and monitoring of the open space and the Landscape Management Plan.
- 8.16 It should be the developer's responsibility to inform buyers of new properties of the requirement to pay for an annual maintenance contribution (Service Charge/Estate Fee).
- 8.17 Once open space has been transferred to a management organisation, the Council or other organisation it is no longer the developer's responsibility to manage the open space. It is also recommended that any costs or other resident commitments in relation to the management of open space on new developments (e.g. service charge) should also be flagged by the appointed solicitor during the conveyancing process to residents.

Updated Assessments

- 8.18 To ensure an up-to-date evidence base, it is recommended that quality and value audits are refreshed on an annual basis. Audits should be undertaken to a proportion of open spaces, across each relevant typology in Manchester (e.g. 10%). Audits will provide a picture of any variances to the existing evidence base and will identify priority areas for investment.
- 8.19 An assessment of open spaces against SHLAA layers should also be undertaken to ensure sites are routinely re-evaluated and categorised by typology as needed.

Maps

Map 1: Parks and Garden Accessibility (TEP ref: G10280.01.004A)

Map 2: Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace Accessibility (TEP ref: G10280.01.005A)

Map 3: Amenity Greenspace Accessibility (TEP ref: G10280.01.006B)

Map 4: Provision for Children and Young People Accessibility (TEP ref: G10280.01.007A)

Map 5: Open Spaces in Manchester City (TEP ref: G10280.01.001C)

Map 6: Population Density (TEP ref: G10280.01.013)

Map 7: Indices of Multiple Deprivation (National) (TEP ref: G10280.01.011A)

Map 8: Indices of Multiple Deprivation (Manchester ranked) (TEP ref: G10280.01.012A)

Map 9: Open Space Quality (TEP ref: G10280.01.002B)

Map 10: Open Space Value (TEP ref: G10280.01.003B)

Map 11: Allotment Provision (TEP ref: G10280.01.008)



THE
ENVIRONMENT
PARTNERSHIP

Appendix A: Sub-Area Breakdown

North	Central	Central/ North	Central/South	South	Wythenshawe
Ancoats & Beswick Charlestown Cheetham Clayton & Openshaw Crumpsall Harpurhey Higher Blackley Miles Platting & Newton Heath Moston	Ardwick Gorton & Abbey Hey Hulme Levenshulme Longsight Rusholme	Deansgate Piccadilly	Burnage Fallowfield Moss Side Whalley Range	Chorlton Chorlton Park Didsbury East Didsbury West Old Moat Withington	Baguley Brooklands Northenden Sharston Woodhouse Park
*Provided where there are overlaps between Ward and sub-area					

Appendix B: Policy and Strategy Information

Appendix C: Audit Information

Appendix D: Consultation Summary

Appendix E: Example Assessment Process

1. Establish the Baseline

Undertake a desk-based review to identify other open spaces within the relevant accessibility buffer of the Site.

Review national and local planning policies, guidance and strategies to refine the assessment methodology.

2. Site Audits

Undertake site audits of the application site and other relevant sites within the accessibility buffer.

- Assess;
- Accessibility of each Site;
- The typology of each Site;
- The quality score of the Site and comparable sites;
- The value score of the Site and comparable sites; and
- Apply recognised best practice standards throughout the assessment process.

3. Summary Report

Assess existing open space provision within the site and the relevant accessibility buffer.

Identify any surplus or deficit in provision through:

- Assessment of quantity against the adopted standard;
- Assessment of quality against the adopted standard;
- Assessment of value against the adopted standard;
- Determine whether the proposed mitigation should comprise:-
 - On-site replacement provision; or
 - An appropriate financial contribution.



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