

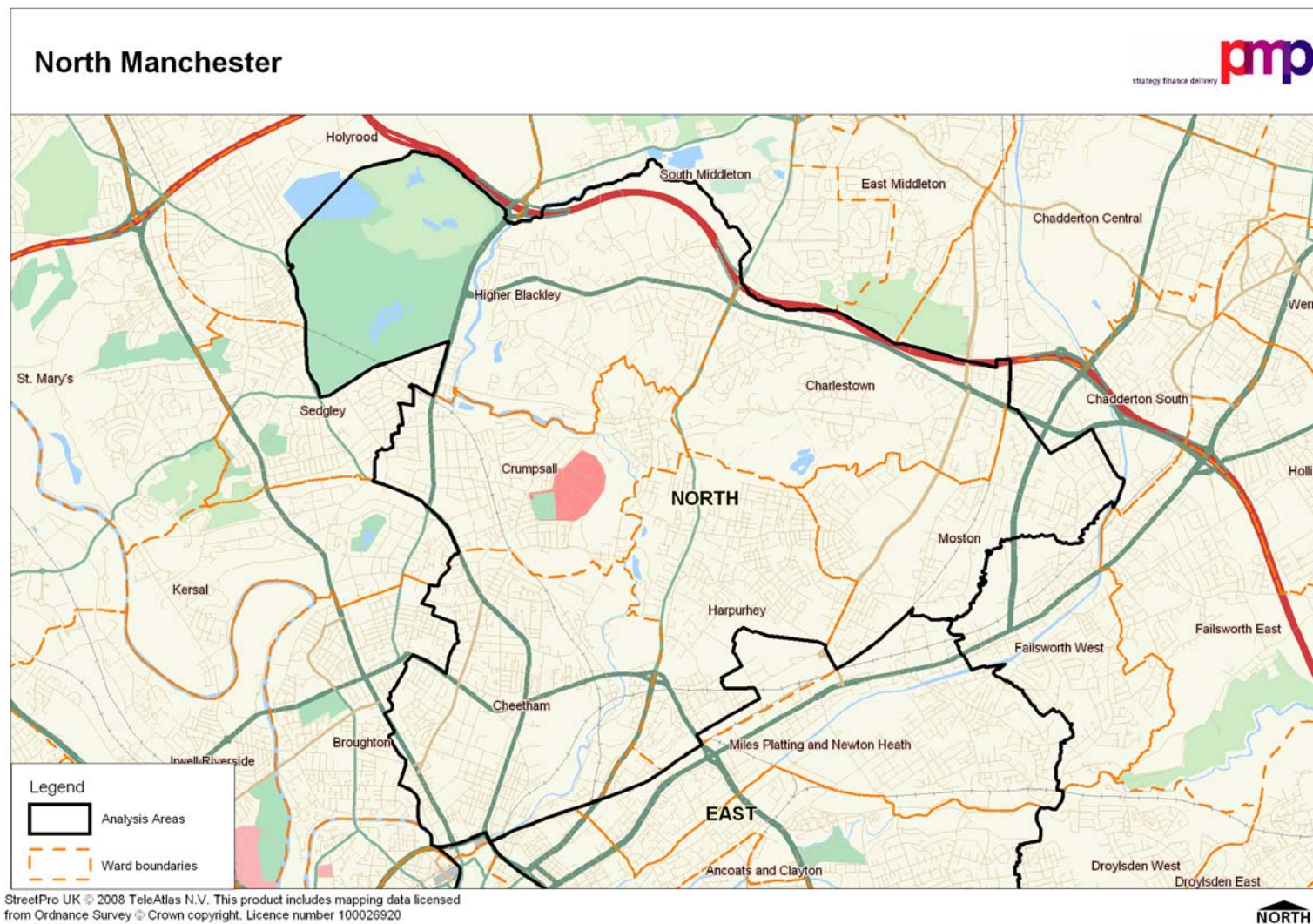
17. North Manchester

Introduction

- 17.1 The North Manchester area extends from the City Centre to the northern area of Manchester. The area contains six wards (Blackley, Charlestown, Moston, Crumpsall, Cheetham, Harpurhey and the Collyhurst area of the central ward) and has a population of 86,000. Map 17.1 overleaf illustrates North Manchester.
- 17.2 In the latter part of the 20th Century, the decline of the traditional economic base had a drastic impact on North Manchester. This led to a gradual depopulation as affluent residents chose to move to the outer suburbs and inward migration declined. In turn, this created a concentration of poverty and deprivation with a wide range of associated social problems.
- 17.3 North Manchester is roughly divided into two halves by the River Irk, which flows from the northern parts of Oldham towards the City Centre, and Rochdale Road which follows its course. Much of the housing in north Manchester is social housing and some of the housing stock is of poor quality, with limited private gardens. The north of the area is blessed by an abundance of large, natural open spaces.
- 17.4 The *Irk Valley Local Plan (2007)* outlines how to make best use of the Irk River Valley and its open spaces and promotes the area as an important natural landscape in North Manchester.
- 17.5 The vision of the plan is to develop the Irk Valley into an integrated regional park system with a network of accessible, high quality open spaces. The provision of a network of open spaces will enhance the quality of life for residents and enhance regeneration in the area.
- 17.6 The eight key objectives of the plan are to:
- use the Irk Valley as a catalyst for regeneration
 - provide high quality, safe and accessible open spaces
 - improve connectivity and linkages
 - improve image and identity
 - protect and enhance ecological assets
 - resolve management and ownership issues
 - increase community involvement
 - integrate open space with existing and proposed built development areas.
- 17.7 The components of the spatial plan for the regional park system will include promoting:
- recreation
 - connectivity
 - quality environment.

- 17.8 There plan outlines a number of strategic actions directly related to open space. This actions are focused upon increasing access, enhancing quality and increasing the provision of open space in North Manchester.
- 17.9 Detailed action plans for a number of sub areas are also contained within the plan. These action plans contain a number of site specific actions aimed at improving open space, sport and recreation facilities in North Manchester.
- 17.10 Over the past decade, the City Council has focussed investment and effort working with the local communities and partners to regenerate the area .The vision for this is embodied in the North Manchester Strategic Regeneration Framework (NMSRF). The key objectives of the framework are:
- strengthening of existing communities
 - repopulating North Manchester and broadening the range of housing stock
 - improving the physical, social and economic environment
 - a distinct character defined by its open spaces
 - an engaged and active resident population.
- 17.11 The SRF identifies issues around the untapped wealth of parks and under utilised derelict land, and aims to secure a balance between the quantity and quality of parks and open spaces and funding for parks in the area.
- 17.12 Of particular relevance to open space, sport and recreation facilities in the area, the targets of the SRF include to:
- improve North Manchester's image by broadening the appeal of public open spaces by creating trails, improved open spaces and a set of "events" that invite greater use
 - eradicate the problem of derelict and neglected open spaces – some bought back to high quality open space or new parks (but as funds are limited informal open spaces are considered to offer potential for high quality residential development which can lever in investment.

Map 17.1 – North Manchester



Open space, sport and recreation provision across North Manchester

17.13 The Victorian parks of North Manchester are some of the area's greatest natural assets. The SRF identifies these parks as a driver for regeneration and identifies that a number of parks and open spaces are in need of investment. Open space, sport and recreation facilities found in North Manchester are as follows:

- three City Parks: Boggart Hole Clough, Heaton Park and Queens Park. Boggart Hole Clough is classified as ancient woodland, however the park also provides a number of activities including athletics and boating. A number of sporting events are regularly held at the park and in 2008 Boggart Hole Clough was awarded Green Flag status for the eighth successive year
- Heaton Park is one of the largest municipal parks in Europe, covering 247 hectares of parkland. The park's historic features have been restored through the Heritage Lottery Fund and in 2009 the park was awarded its fourth Green Flag. The park also has a Green Heritage Site award
- 20 local parks, of which only Crumpsall Park has achieved Green Flag status. This highlights the need to invest at a number of parks across North Manchester
- 55 natural open spaces, with a number of natural areas located within parks. Blackley Forest Nature Reserve is a particularly valuable natural open space site in the area
- 87 amenity green spaces, with the largest site being Victoria Avenue East (6.25 hectares)
- 19 children's play areas, consisting of both stand alone sites and sites located within parks. There are also 30 facilities for young people with the types of sites ranging from BMX tracks to five a side football areas
- a wide range of outdoor sports facilities, including:
 - one athletics track
 - six bowling green sites
 - five tennis court sites
- seven allotment sites. Minor waiting lists are evident at four of the seven sites and the site containing the greatest number of plots is Crumpsall and Cheetham Allotments (113).

17.14 Table 17.1 summarises the quantity of open space falling into each of the typologies assessed as part of this study. Outdoor sports facilities are evaluated separately in table 17.2.

Table 17.1 – Open space across North Manchester

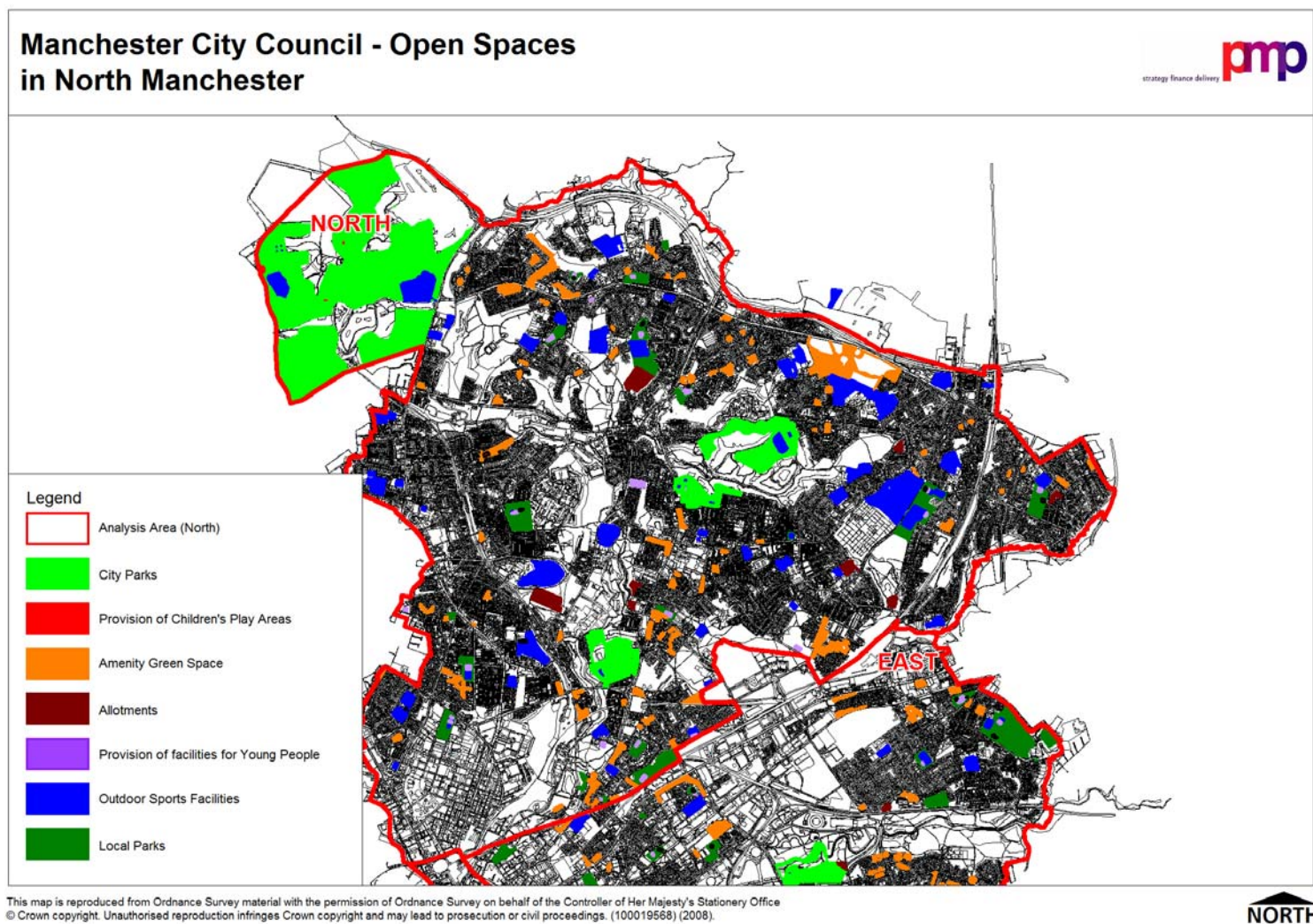
| Open space type | Number of sites | Hectares (total) | Hectares per 1000 population |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| City Parks | 3 | 34.42 (excluding Heaton Park) | 0.35 |
| Local parks | 20 | 29.94 | 0.30 |
| Natural and semi natural open space | 55 | 344.83 | 3.47 |
| Amenity green space | 87 | 39.31 | 0.44 |
| Children's play areas | 19 | 1.64 | 0.02 |
| Provision for young people | 30 | 3.25 | 0.03 |
| Allotments | 7 | 8.98 | 0.09 |

Table 17.2 – Outdoor Sports Facilities

| Outdoor sports facility type | Number of sites | Hectares (total) | Hectares per 1000 population |
|------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| Grass pitches | 45 | 66.34 | 0.74 |
| Synthetic turf pitches | 2 (1 full size) | 0.65 | 0.01 |
| Bowling greens | 6 (9 greens) | 1.88 | 0.02 |
| Tennis courts | 5 (9 courts) | 0.5 | 0.01 |

17.15 Map 17.2 overleaf illustrates the distribution of open spaces across North Manchester.

Map 17.2 – Open space, sport and recreation facilities in North Manchester



The adequacy of provision in North Manchester

- 17.16 As discussed in Section 4, standards have been set for all types of open space. The application of the recommended quantity, quality and accessibility standards is essential in understanding the existing distribution of open space sport and recreation facilities and identifying areas where provision is insufficient to meet local needs.
- 17.17 Table 17.3 evaluates the adequacy of the quantity of open space in North Manchester by measuring the existing provision against the local standards. It also highlights the amount of population growth that could be accommodated before existing provision would fall below the minimum standards.

Table 17.3 – Application of the Manchester City Council Quantity Standards in North Manchester

| Type of open space | Current Provision (hectares) | Shortfall / surplus against local standard 2008 (hectares) | Amount of population growth that can be accommodated |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|--|--|
| City Parks | 34.42 | 16.50 | 82,477 |
| Local parks | 29.94 | -13.98 | Below minimum |
| Natural and semi natural | 344.83 | 174.55 | 91,866 |
| Amenity green spaces | 39.31 | 3.46 | 8,652 |
| Children's play areas | 1.64 | -0.74 | Below minimum |
| Provision for young people | 3.25 | 0.20 | 5,965 |
| Outdoor sports facilities | 82.23 | -5.82 | Below minimum |
| Allotments | 8.98 | No standard set | No standard set |
| Civic spaces | 0 | No standard set | No standard set |
| Cemeteries and churchyards | 44.99 | No standard set | No standard set |

Green = above the standard, Red = below the standard

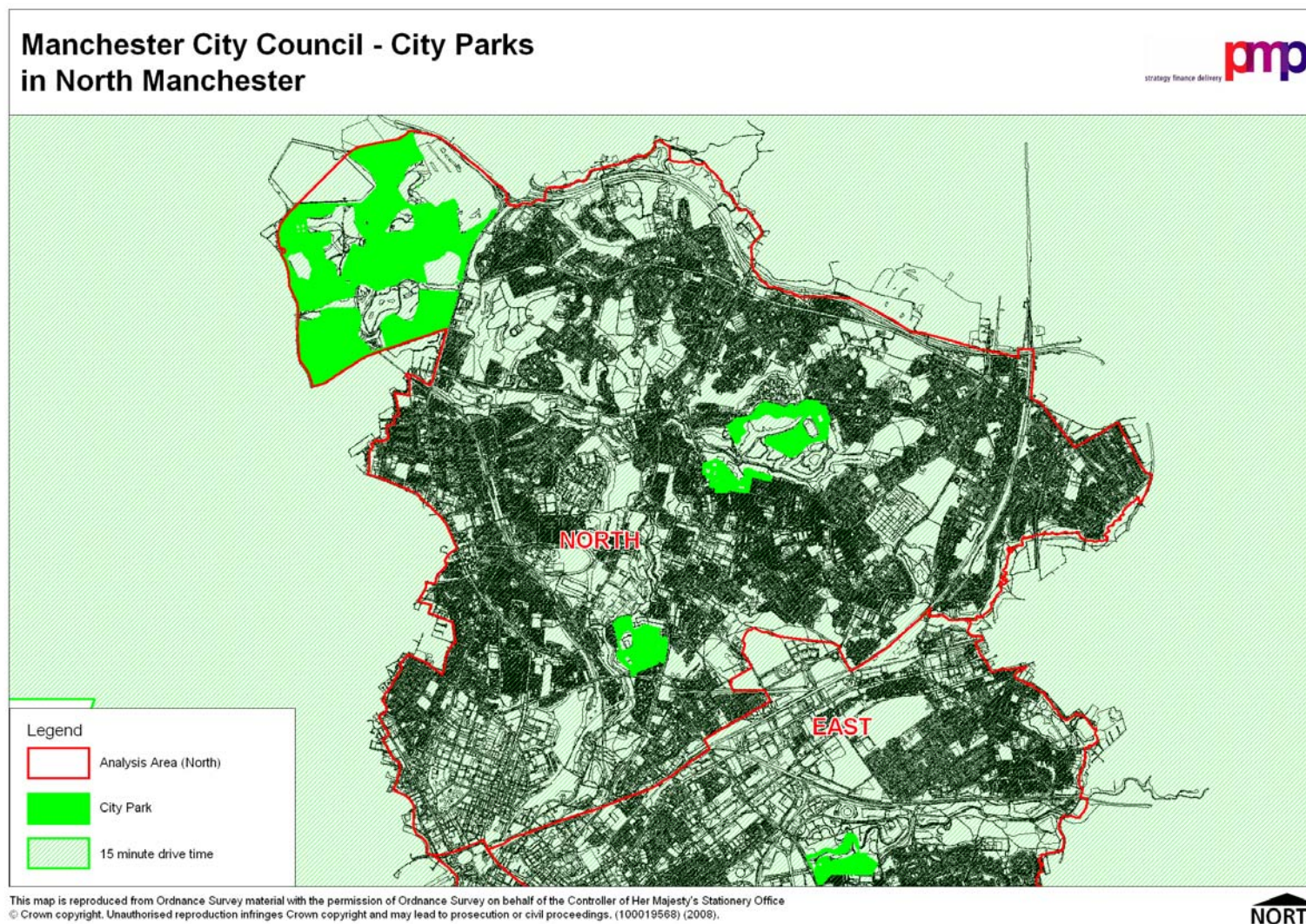
- 17.18 The application of local quantity standards demonstrates that on the whole, the quantity of open space in North Manchester is high, with provision of City Parks, natural and semi natural open spaces, amenity space and facilities for young people exceeding minimum expected standards. Although there are shortfalls in the quantity of local parks, the city and regional parks in the area offset this shortfall.
- 17.19 The quantity standards enable the identification of areas that do not meet the minimum provision standards, while the accessibility standards will help determine where those deficiencies are of high importance. It is essential to apply the standards in isolation and then to apply them in the context of each other. Applying the standards together is a more meaningful method of analysis than applying the standards separately.
- 17.20 Maps 17.3 – 17.12 therefore evaluate the provision of each of the different types of open space across North Manchester.

- 17.21 Reflecting the high quantity of provision, there are few deficiencies, with the only gaps in provision being in facilities for children (particularly Harpurhey and Cheetham) and for young people (Charlestown). There are however shortfalls of outdoor sports facilities in North Manchester, with gaps identified in the provision of synthetic turf facilities, tennis courts and bowling greens.
- 17.22 The quality of open spaces in the north is below average and the poorest in the City. Table 17.4 summarises the average quality score achieved for each type of open space in North Manchester and shows that natural open spaces and facilities for young people are particularly poor quality. There are however some extremes of provision, for example Heaton Park is a particularly high quality site.

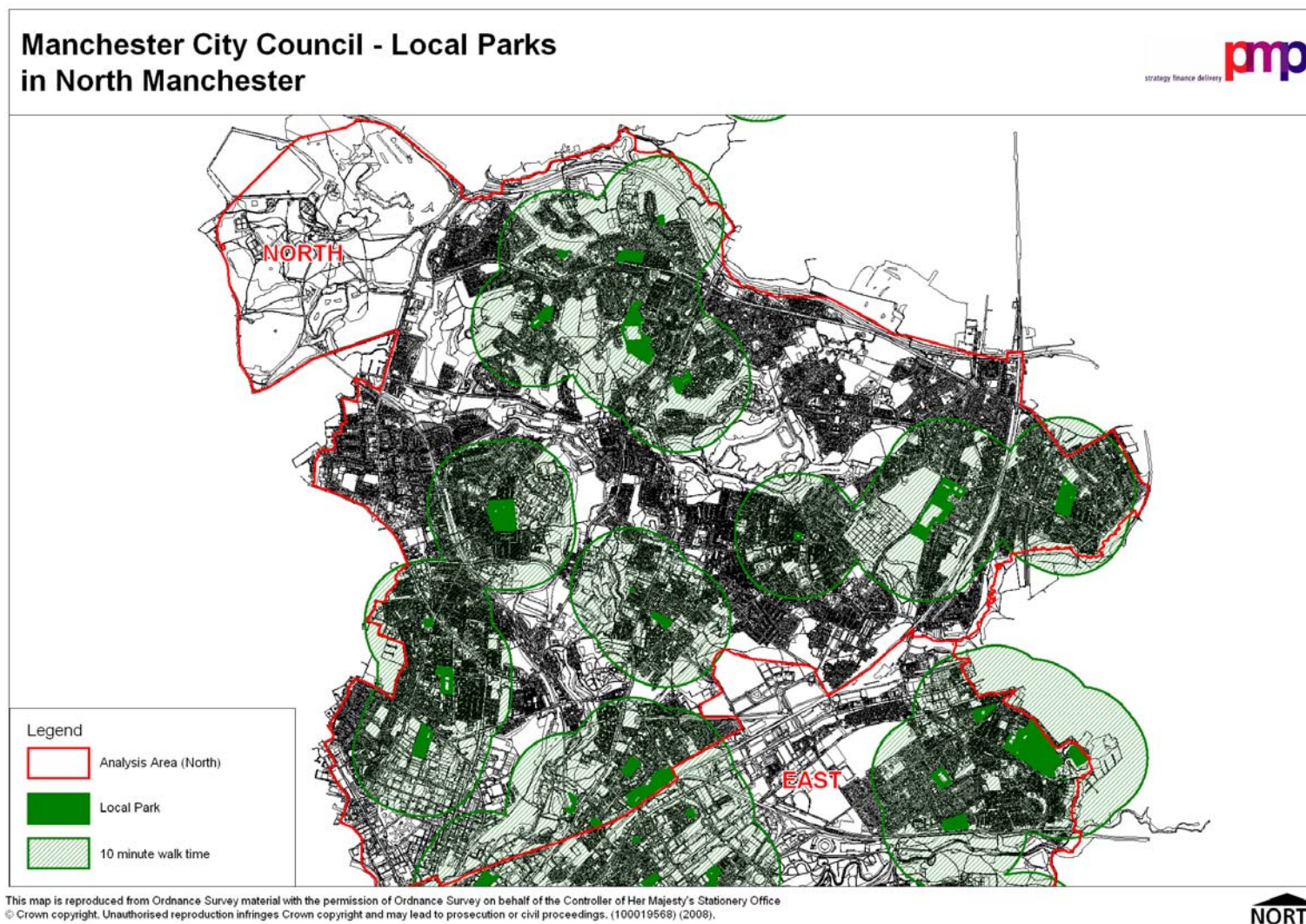
Table 17.4 – Quality of open spaces in North Manchester

| Area | Outdoor sports facilities | Natural open space | Amenity green space | Provision for children | Provision for young people |
|-------|---------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| North | 77 | 58 | 70 | 65 | 46 |

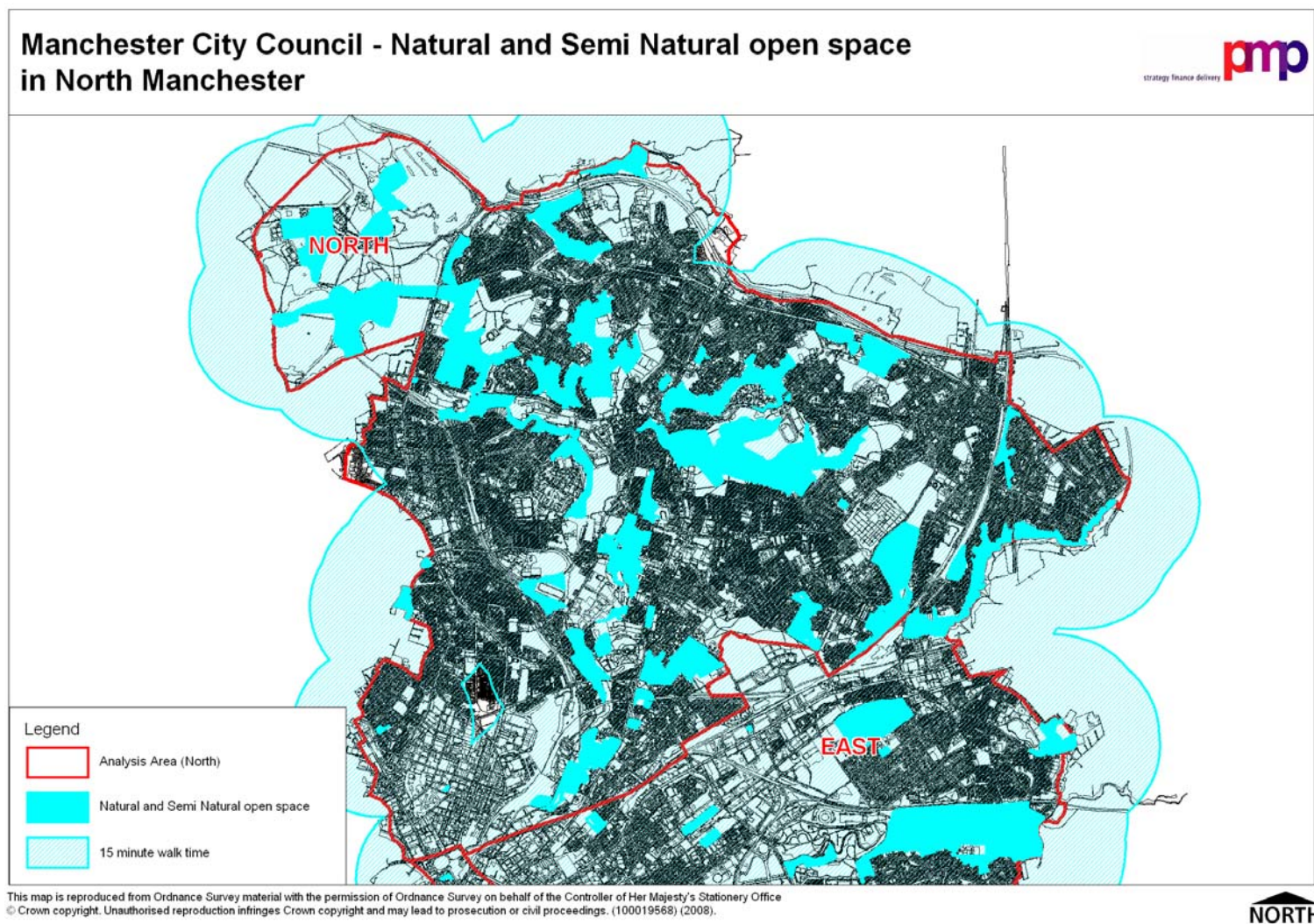
Map 17.3 – City Parks in North Manchester



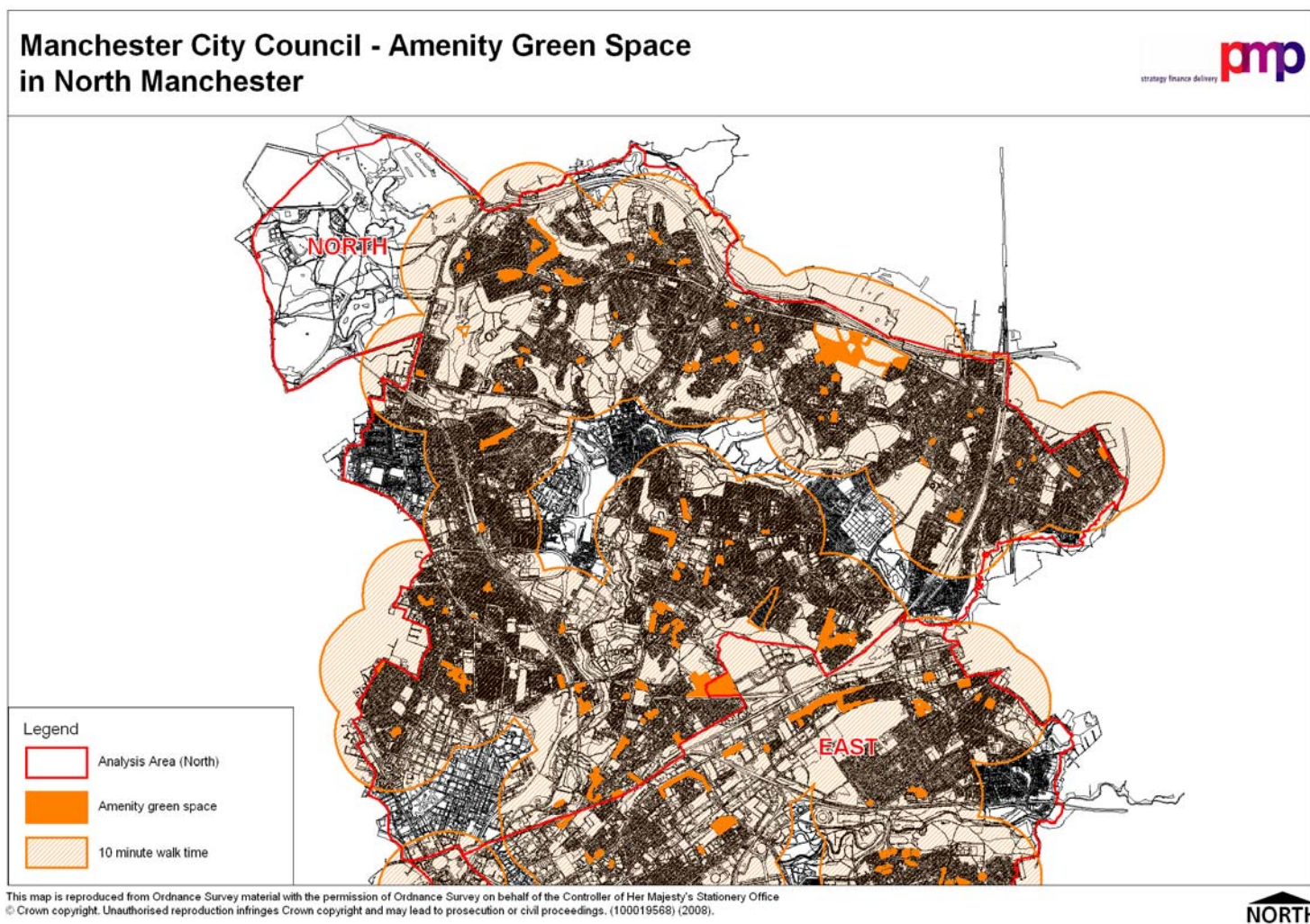
Map 17.4 – Local Parks in North Manchester



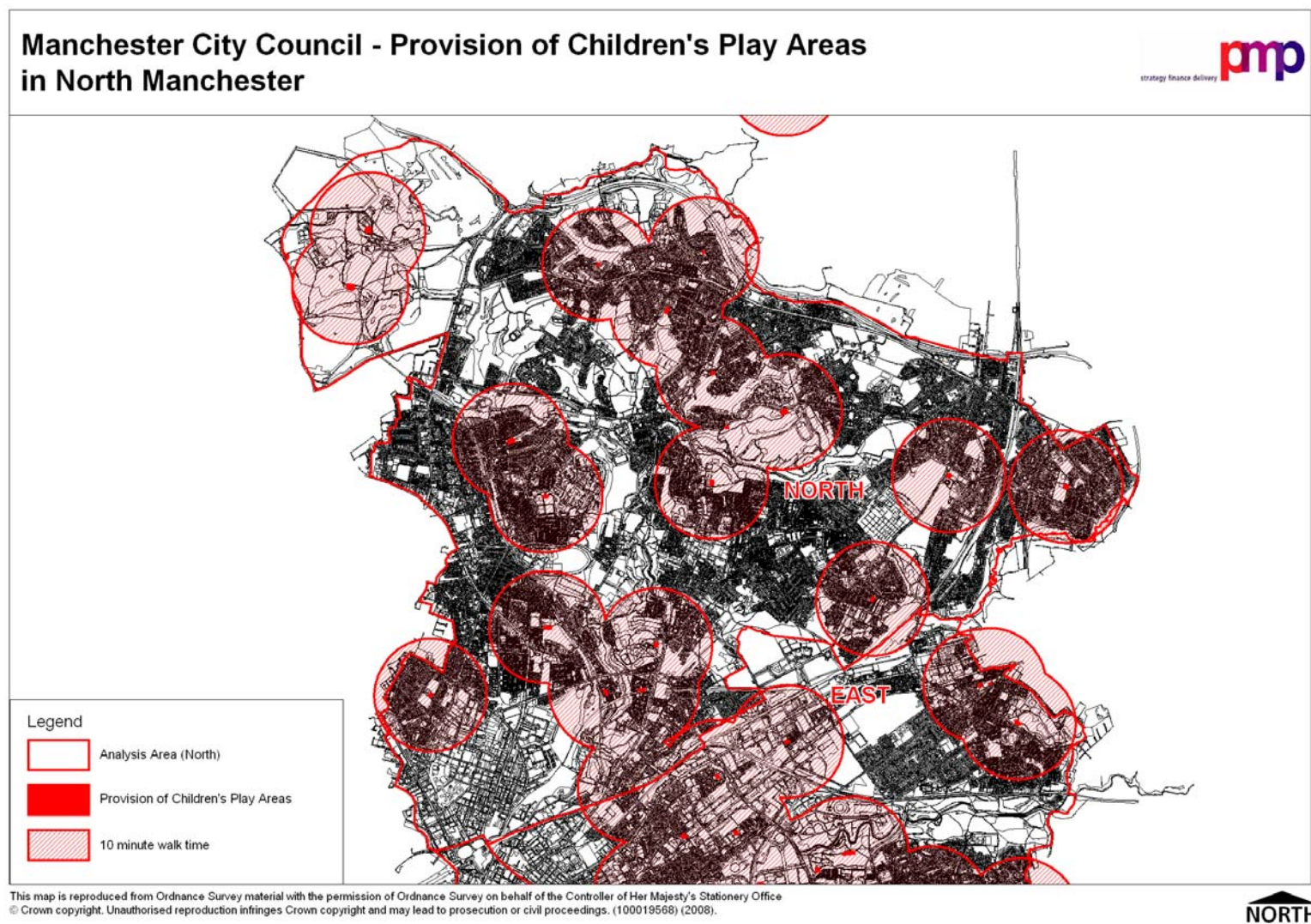
Map 17.5 – Natural and semi natural open space in North Manchester



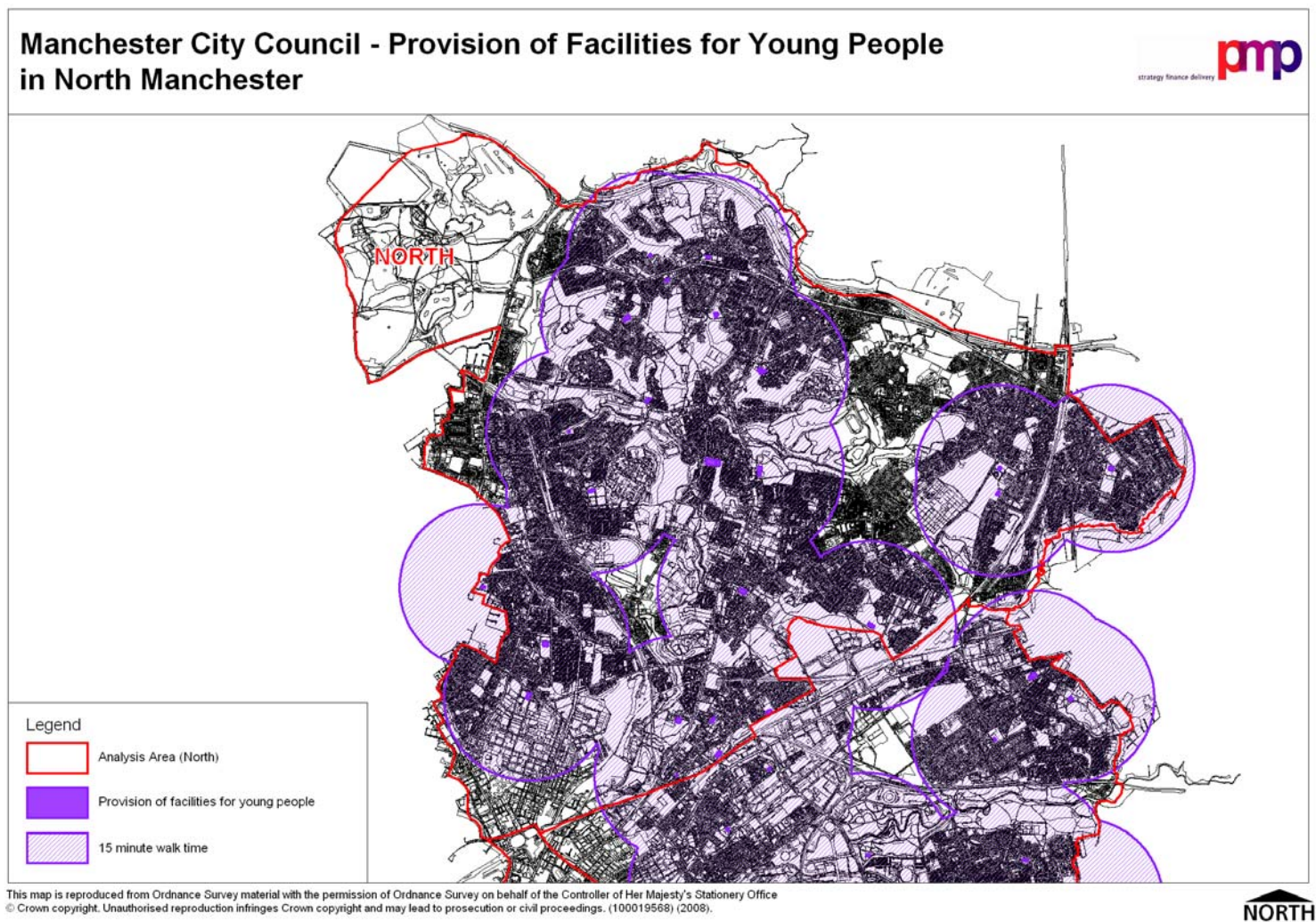
Map 17.6 – Amenity green space in North Manchester



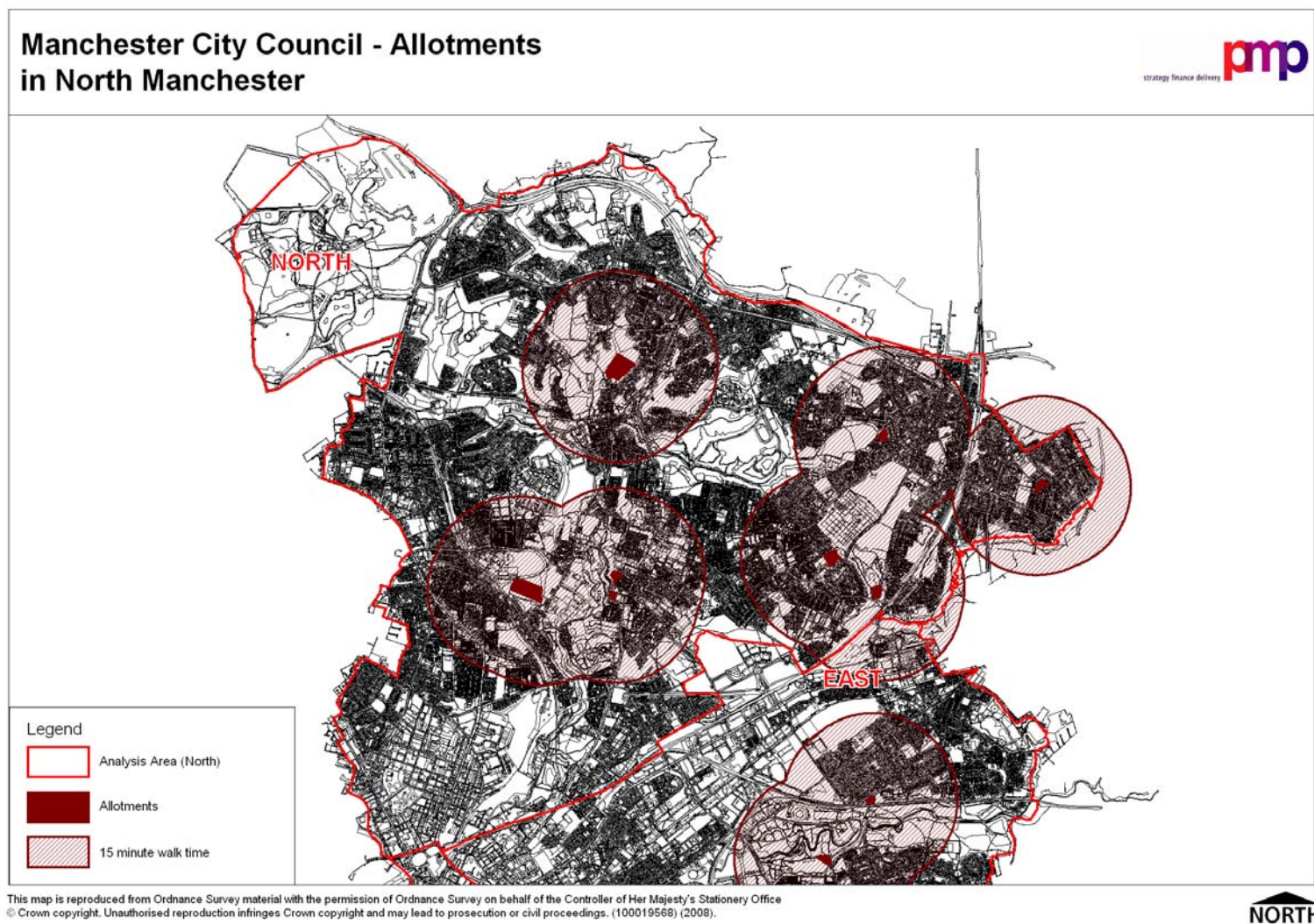
Map 17.7 – Children’s play areas in North Manchester



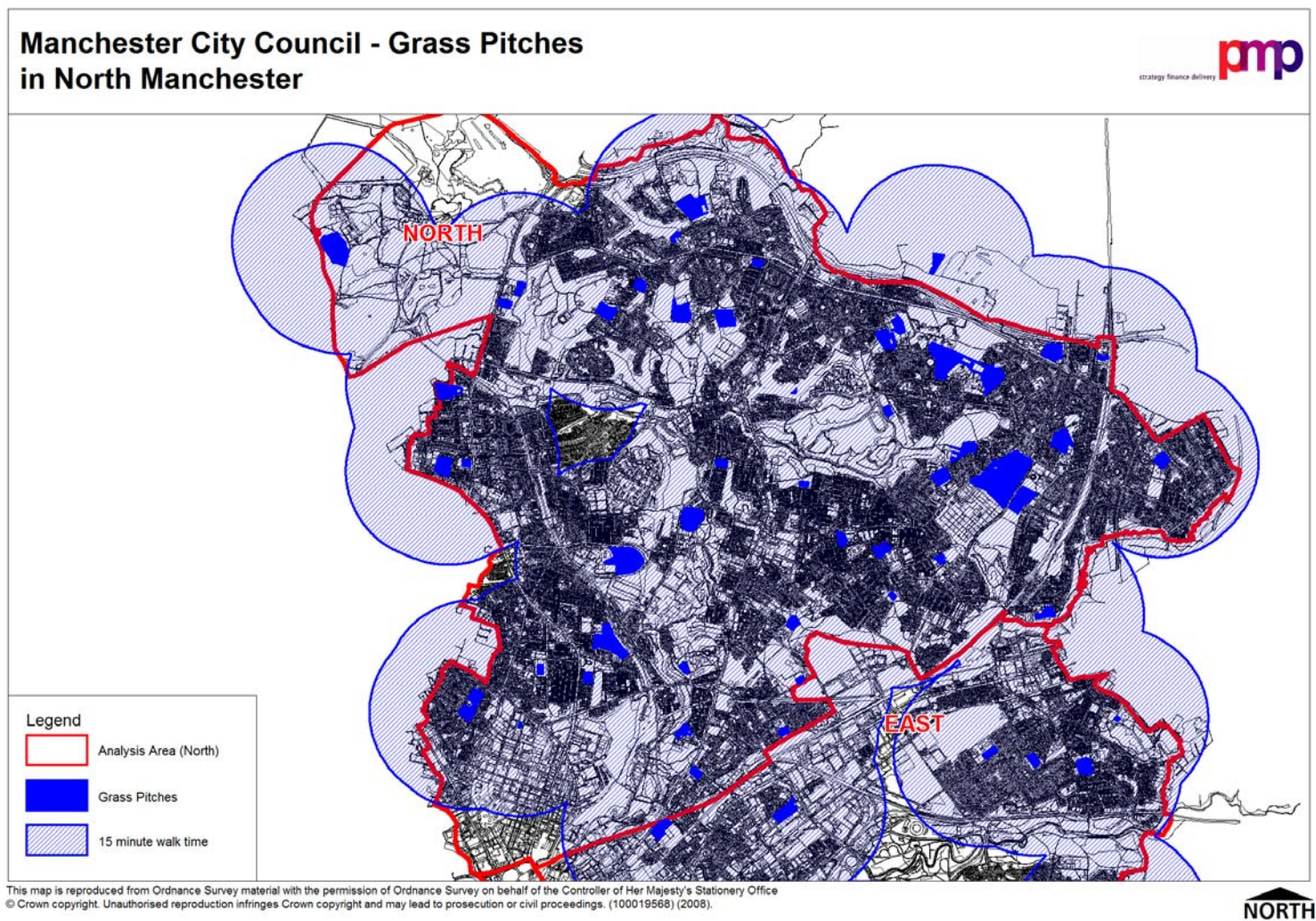
Map 17.8 – Provision for young people in North Manchester



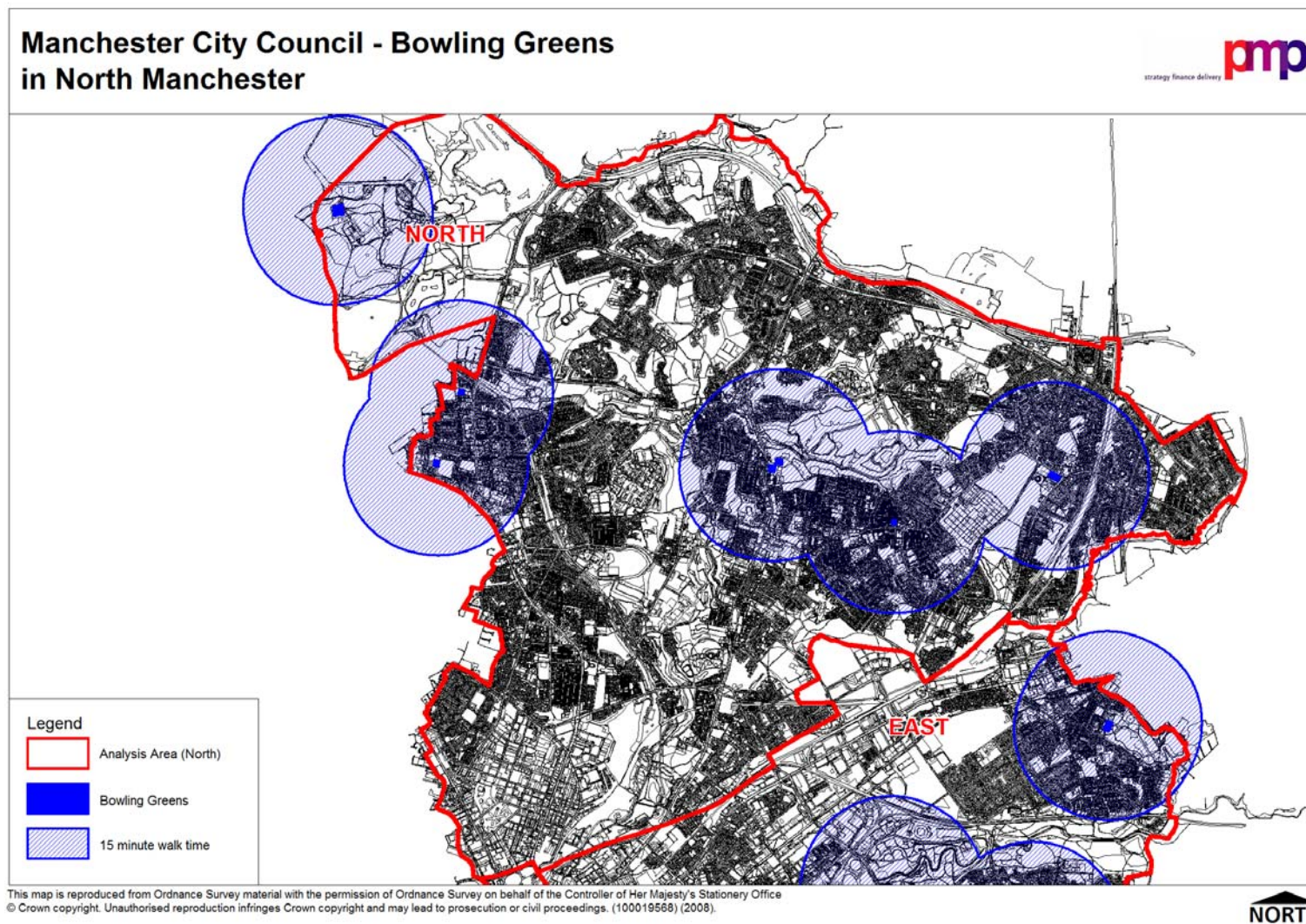
Map 17.9 – Provision of allotments in North Manchester



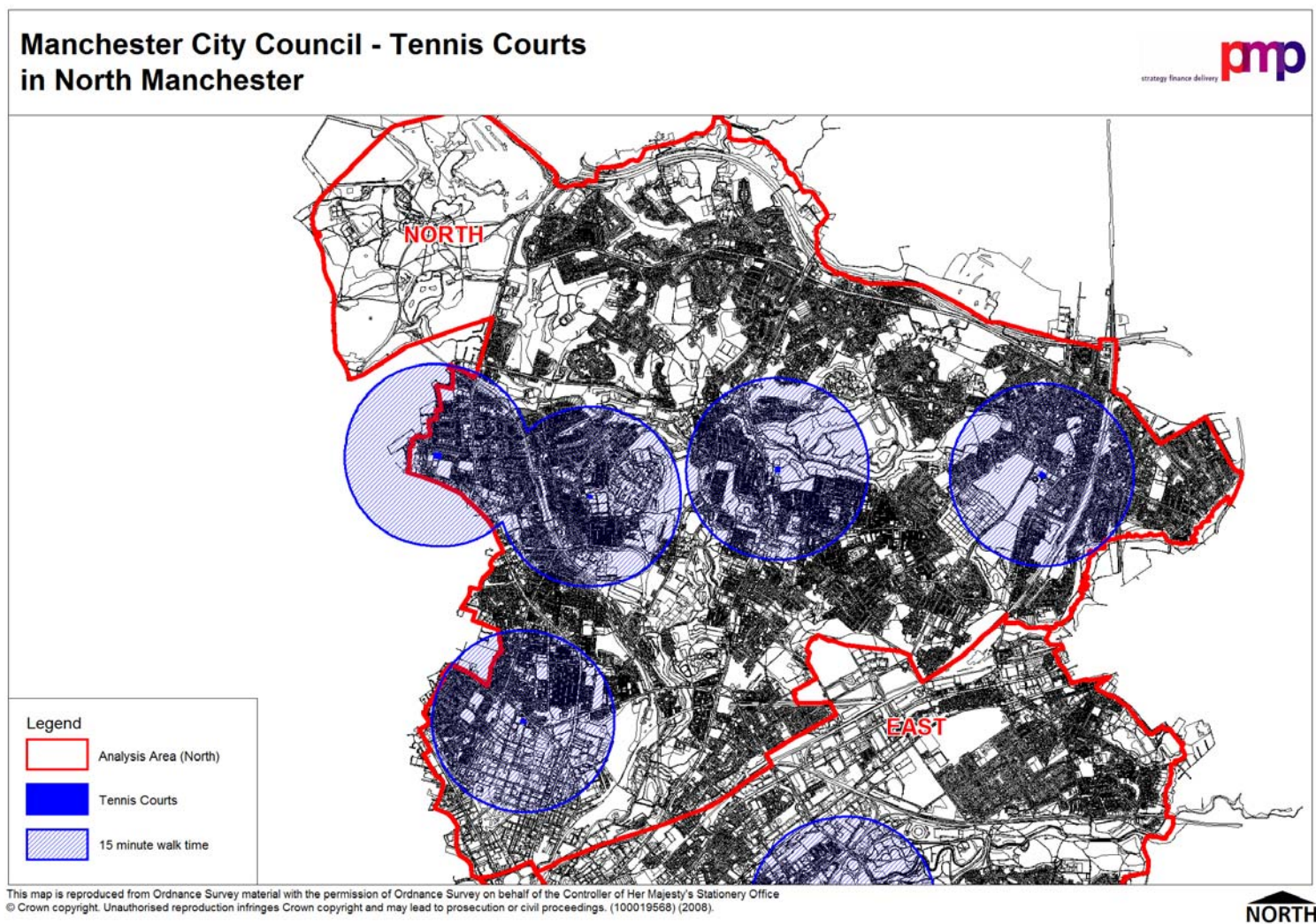
Map 17.10 – Provision of grass pitches in North Manchester



Map 17.11 – Provision of bowling greens in North Manchester



Map 17.12 – Provision of tennis courts in North Manchester



Priorities in North Manchester

- 17.23 Table 17.5 summarises the key issues arising in North Manchester with regards open space, sport and recreation facilities and highlights the key recommendations for the future delivery of open space, sport and recreation provision.

Table 17.5 – The future delivery of open space, sport and recreation facilities in North Manchester

| Open space type | Issues | Recommendations |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| <p>Parks and Gardens</p> | <p>Accessibility mapping illustrates that a number of residents in North Manchester are unable to access a local park within the recommended 10 minute walk time. Application of the quantity standard reinforces this deficiency, with there being a current shortfall in the area equating to 18.76 hectares (the greatest shortfall in the City).</p> <p>Despite this, the provision of City Parks in the area is sufficient to meet demand and residents outside the catchment of a local park have local (within 10 minute walk time) access to a City Park (Boggart Hole Clough and Queens Park). As a higher order facility the presence of these sites negates the need for local park provision.</p> <p>Heaton Park, a regional park, is the largest park in Manchester and this site is located on the north west boundary. This site provides a variety of facilities and recreational opportunities for residents and further negates the need for new provision in North Manchester.</p> <p>Site visits indicate that the quality of larger parks in North Manchester is high, with two of the three sites achieving Green Flag status.</p> <p>The quality of local parks in North Manchester the lowest of all analysis areas in the City. The average quality score of a site is 68% and nine sites have quality scores below 70%. Only Crumpsall Park has achieved Green Flag status. This highlights the need for qualitative improvements at Local Parks in North Manchester.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the quality of the three Green Flag accredited parks (Ongoing) • Drive a programme of improvements to the quality of existing parks (Short to medium term) • Evaluate the impact of population growth on the capacity of existing parks (Longer term). |

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| Open space type | Issues | Recommendations |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| Natural and Semi Natural Open Space | <p>North Manchester contains the highest quantity of natural and semi natural open space across the City (344.83 hectares). As a result, application of the quantity standard reveals that there is sufficient provision to meet demand and the current provision of this type of open space can accommodate a population growth of 95,769.</p> <p>Accessibility mapping reinforces this with all residents able to access a natural or semi natural open space within the recommended 15 minute walk time.</p> <p>The quality of natural and semi natural open space is good, with the average quality score of a site being 64%. However, quality scores range significantly from 20% - 88% and 11 sites scored below 60%, highlighting the need to enhance the quality of natural and semi natural open space in this area of the City.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive a programme of improvements to the quality of existing natural open spaces, taking into account the findings of the site assessments as well as the need to balance recreation with biodiversity and conservation (Short to medium term) • Promote the development of green linkages connecting residents with natural open spaces in nearby areas as well as creating wildlife corridors for migration and travel (Short to medium term). |
| Amenity Green Space | <p>Application of the quantity standard indicates that the quantity of amenity green space exceeds the minimum standard. The provision of amenity green space is sufficient to accommodate growth of 8652 residents. Accessibility mapping supports this, with the majority of residents able to access an amenity green space. However, a corridor of accessibility deficiency is evident in the centre of the area.</p> <p>Although some residents in the centre of the area are outside the catchment of an amenity green space, when considering amenity green space in the context of the provision of parks and gardens, nearly all residents have access to a park.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive a programme of improvements to the quality of existing amenity spaces. • Despite high levels of provision of amenity space, consider the need for new amenity spaces as part of development at a localized level, where deficiencies may occur (ongoing) • Ensure that amenity spaces are integrated within the overall green space network and that they are connected with other larger spaces (Longer term). |

| Open space type | Issues | Recommendations |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| | <p>The quality of amenity green space is average, with the average quality score of a site being 71%. However, quality scores range significantly from 48% - 96% and 29 sites achieved quality scores below 70%, highlighting the need for significant qualitative improvements.</p> | |
| Provision for Children | <p>Application of the quantity standard reveals that there is insufficient provision of children's play areas to meet demand. The current shortfall equates to 0.74 hectares, which is approximately seven play areas.</p> <p>Accessibility mapping reinforces the quantitative shortfall, with several areas outside of the catchment areas for facilities, in particular Harpurhey and Cheetham.</p> <p>Despite a lack of dedicated provision for children, there is an abundance of amenity spaces and parks, indicating that there are opportunities to locate new facilities on existing sites.</p> <p>The quality of existing play areas in North Manchester is average, with the average quality score of a site being 73%. Although the overall quality of play areas is average, quality scores do range significantly from 50% - 80% and no sites achieved a quality score within the top quartile level. Therefore, qualitative improvements are required to a number of play areas in North Manchester.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide new facilities across North Manchester to address existing deficiencies. Up to seven new facilities may be required. New development will further exacerbate demand for facilities and the need for new provision should be evaluated on a case by case basis (Short term) • Drive a programme of qualitative improvements across existing facilities ensuring that facilities meet the needs of communities that they serve and provide a challenging play environment (Ongoing). |
| Provision for Young People | <p>In contrast to facilities for children, application of the quantity standard indicates that there are sufficient facilities for young people to meet demand. The current stock of facilities is adequate to accommodate a population growth of 5,965.</p> <p>While accessibility mapping demonstrates that the majority of residents have access to a facility for young people within the recommended 15 minute walk time, residents in Charlestown are outside of the appropriate catchment for a facility.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide one new facility in Charlestown to address the shortfall in provision. This could potentially be located on an existing amenity green space site (Short term) • Drive a programme of qualitative improvements across existing facilities ensuring that facilities meet the needs of communities that they serve and provide a challenging play environment (Ongoing). |

SECTION 17 – NORTH MANCHESTER

| Open space type | Issues | Recommendations |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| | <p>The quality of facilities for young people in North Manchester is the lowest of all areas in the City, with the average quality score of a site being 59%. Quality scores ranges significantly from 20% - 100% and eight sites fall within the bottom quartile level (60% and below). This highlights the need for significant qualitative enhancements to a number of facilities for young people.</p> | |
| Outdoor Sports Facilities | <p>The overall quantity of provision in the North area falls below the recommended minimum standards. Analysis of the distribution of specific facilities also demonstrates shortfalls of particular facility types including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bowling greens – in Crumpsall, Cheetham • Tennis courts – in Harpurhey • Synthetic pitches. <p>As well as containing some deficiencies in provision, the North area contains the lowest quality facilities in the City, indicating that qualitative improvements will be particularly important in this area.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on qualitative improvements to existing facilities using the findings of the site visits as a guide (Short term) • Address gaps in current provision where demand is expressed considering particularly synthetic turf pitches, tennis courts and bowling greens (Medium term) • Monitor ongoing demand for new provision in light of potential increases in participation and / or population growth (Ongoing). |

Summary

17.24 Analysis of the existing provision highlights that some of the key issues include:

- there are high levels of provision in comparison to other areas of the City and only the quantity of local parks, play areas and outdoor sports facilities fall below the minimum standard. The shortfall of local parks is offset by the presence of City Parks and also Heaton Park, a regional facility
- the distribution of open space across North Manchester is even, with few gaps in provision. The only requirements for new provision are facilities for children and young people and some specific types of outdoor sports facility
- the quality of open space is particularly poor in the North in comparison to the rest of the City, particularly with regards provision for young people and natural open spaces
- future priorities predominantly focus on qualitative improvements to existing sites rather than the development of new facilities.