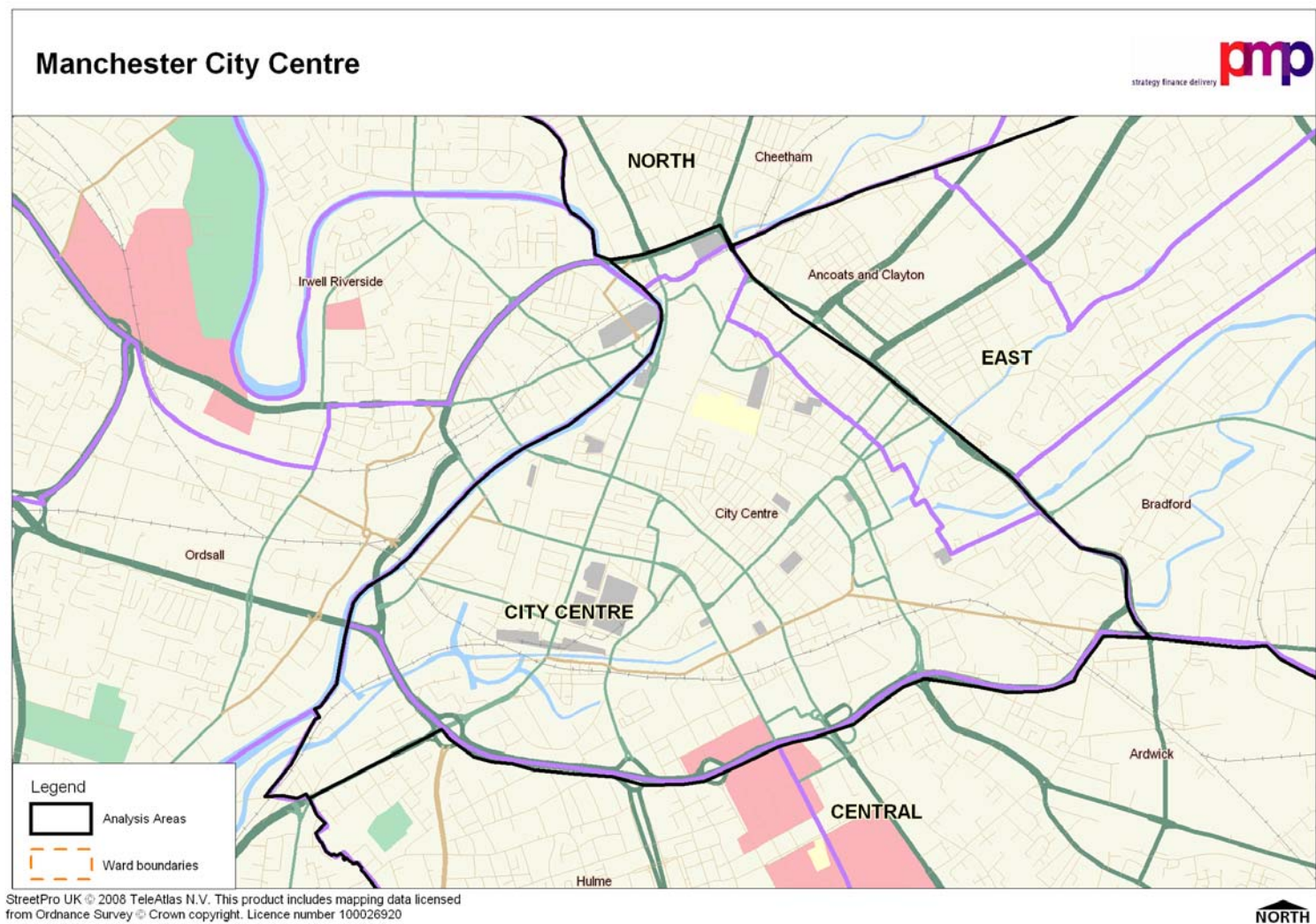


19. Manchester City Centre

Introduction

- 19.1 The population of Manchester City Centre is approximately 19,000. The area is characterised by high density new housing, predominantly in the form of apartments with no gardens. The effective provision of green space is therefore particularly important in this area. Map 19.1 overleaf illustrates the location of Manchester City Centre.
- 19.2 Manchester City Centre is the focal point of the North West in terms of business, employment and visitors. As a result, land values in this area are high and the primary focus of the area is commercial activity. In addition to employment use, there are increasing numbers of residential areas. The majority of dwellings are modern apartments and few offer access to private green space.
- 19.3 The development of the public realm within the City Centre has played a key role in the regeneration of the area and is now integral to the character of the City. Open space in the City Centre is used not just by residents but also by workers and tourists.
- 19.4 The City Centre Strategic Plan recognises attractive green spaces for residents at Sackville Park, St Johns Gardens, Parsonage Gardens, Piccadilly and Cathedral Gardens. Large open spaces, such as Hulme Park and Heaton Park are also easily accessible.
- 19.5 Canal basins and routes along waterways are also identified as providing additional opportunities for local residents as well as acting as routes in and out of the City Centre for visitors.
- 19.6 Key priorities identified in the plan include:
- redevelopment of St Peter's Square
 - providing new public spaces in Eastern Gateway
 - Irwell City Park – this will provide a number of green spaces and linkages to visitor attractions and existing green spaces in the City Centre.
- 19.7 The City Centre is located in direct proximity to the Oxford Road Corridor. This corridor is the focus of a significant regeneration programme driven by the Manchester City South Partnership. The area covers 600 acres immediately south of Manchester City Centre. The strategic framework for this area addresses a range of issues including transport, environment, culture, retail, employment and linkage to the surrounding communities. As a result, open space is central to the proposals in the area and there will be a concerted effort to improve the quantity and quality of green spaces, making the area a more pleasant place to live and work. As well as new open spaces, the area will be “greened” through the planting of additional trees to create a green appearance. This area provides green space which is accessible to City Centre residents and also links the City Centre with other neighbourhoods in the City.

Map 19.1 – Manchester City Centre



Open space, sport and recreation provision across Manchester City Centre

19.8 Open space, sport and recreation facilities located within Manchester City Centre are as follows:

- three local parks: Parsonage Gardens, Sackville Gardens and St Johns Gardens. These parks provide vital amenity value as well as breaking up the urban landscape. All three parks have been awarded Green Flag status
- one natural open space – Hunts Bank (0.21 hectares)
- 18 amenity green spaces, with the average size of a site being 0.24 hectares
- 28 civic spaces.

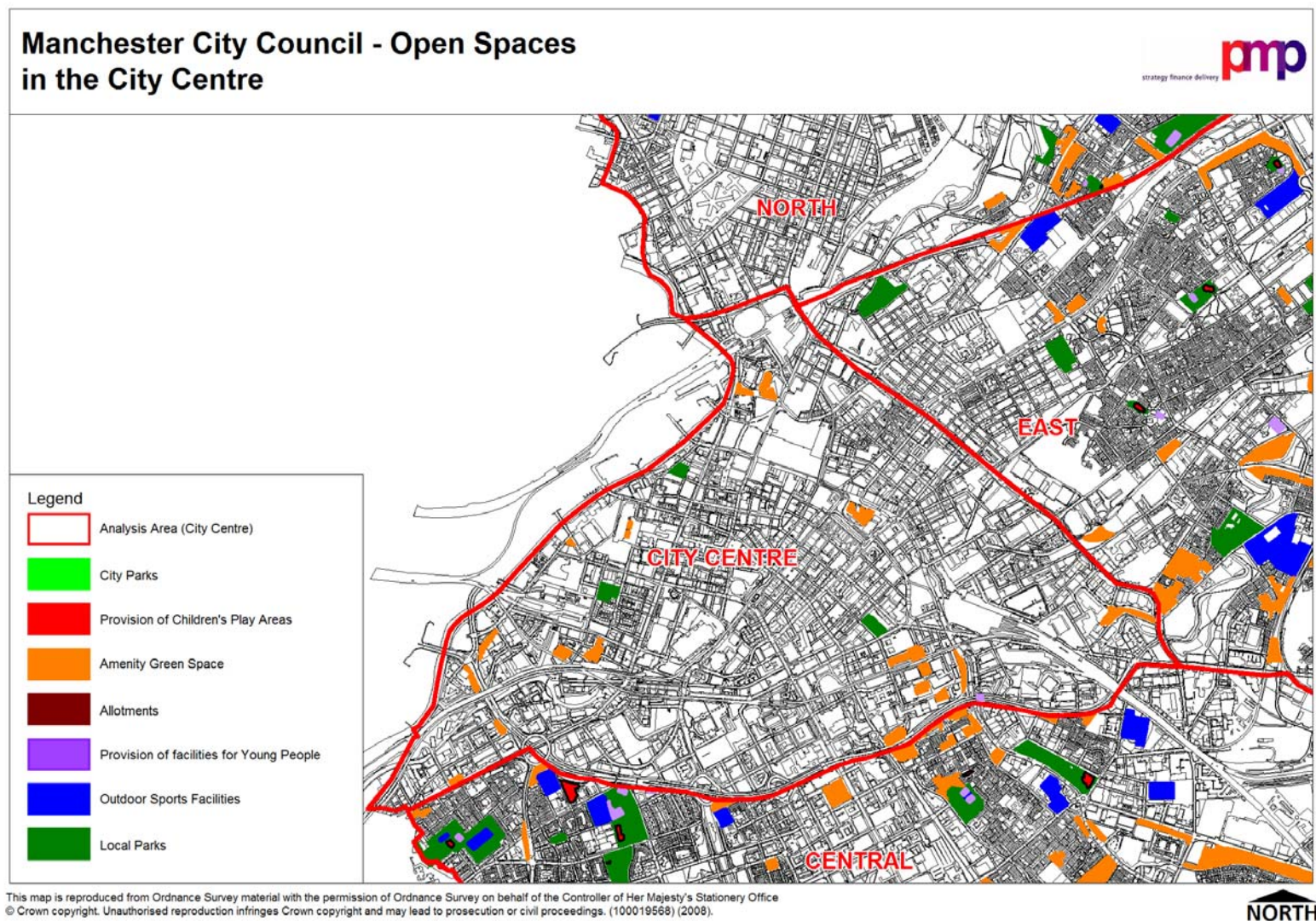
19.9 Table 19.1 summarises the quantity of open space falling into each of the typologies assessed as part of this study. There are no outdoor sports facilities.

Table 19.1 – Open space across Manchester City Centre

Open space type	Number of sites	Hectares (total)	Hectares per 1000 population
City parks	0	0	0
Local parks	3	1.17	0.12
Natural and semi natural open space	1	0.21	0.02
Amenity green space	18	4.40	0.44
Children's play areas	0	0	0
Provision for young people	0	0	0
Allotments	0	0	0
Civic Spaces	28	9.44	0.95

19.10 Map 19.2 overleaf illustrates the distribution of open spaces across Manchester City Centre.

Map 19.2 – Open space, sport and recreation facilities in Manchester City Centre



The adequacy of provision in Manchester City Centre

- 19.11 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.
- 19.12 Table 19.2 evaluates the adequacy of the quantity of open space in Manchester City Centre 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. It must be noted that this should be treated as an indication only, as it will be important to take into account the impact that visitors and workers have on the demand for open spaces. Furthermore, the interrelationship between civic spaces and green spaces is a unique feature of the City Centre.
- 19.13 Due to the small amount of provision in the City Centre and the inappropriateness in providing more natural or semi natural open space, the quantity standard has not been applied to this area..

Table 19.2 – Application of the Manchester City Council Quantity Standards in Manchester City Centre

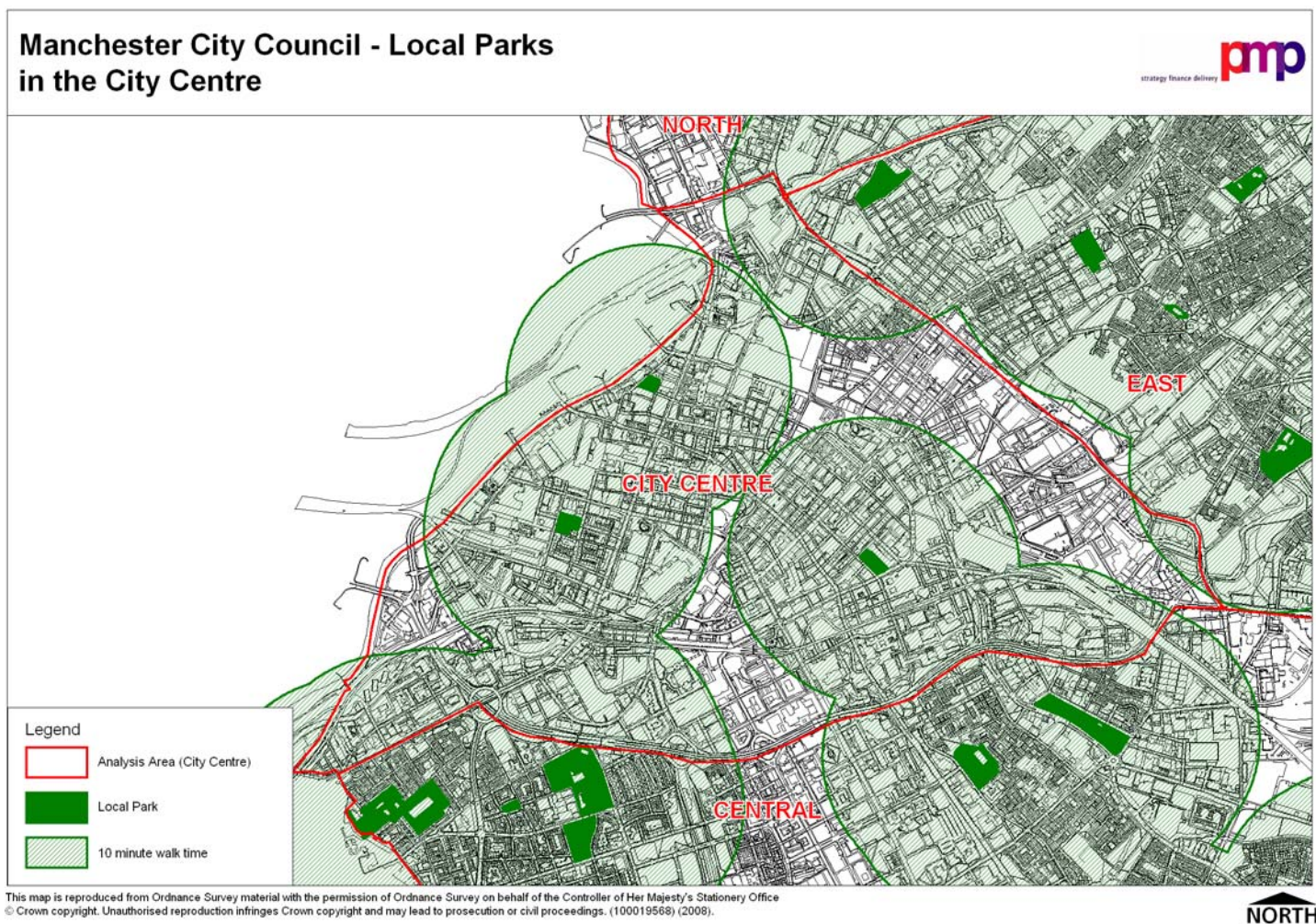
Type of open space	Current Provision (hectares)	Shortfall / surplus against local standard 2008 (hectares)	Amount of population growth that can be accommodated
City parks	0	-1.99	Below minimum
Local parks	1.17	-3.70	Below minimum
Natural and semi natural	0.21	No standard set	No standard set
Amenity green spaces	4.40	0.42	1,052
Children's play areas	0	-0.26	Below minimum
Provision for young people	0	-0.34	Below minimum
Outdoor sports facilities	0	-9.75	Below minimum
Allotments	8.21	No standard set	No standard set
Civic spaces	9.44	No standard set	No standard set
Cemeteries and churchyards	0	No standard set	No standard set

Green = above the standard, Red = below the standard

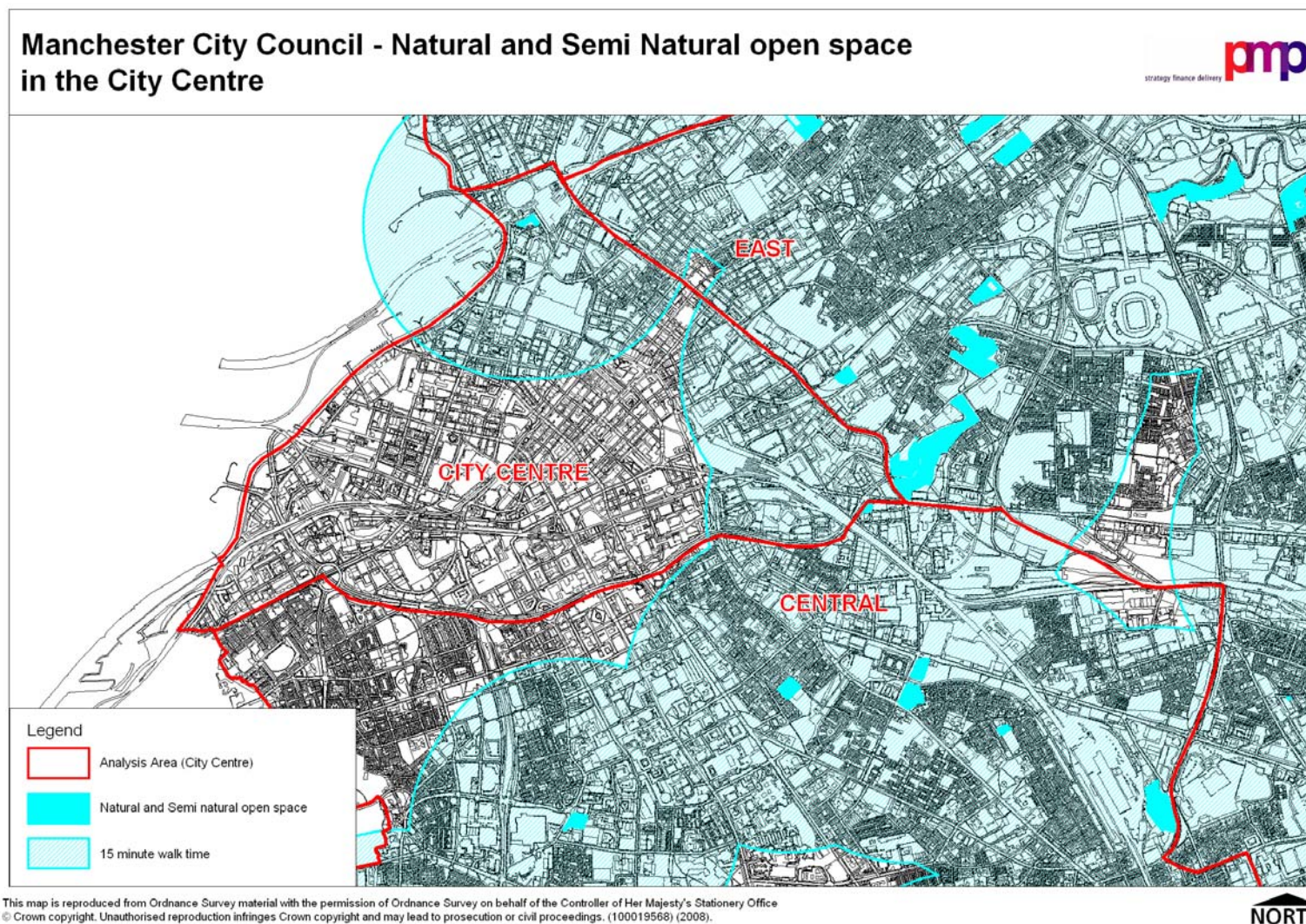
- 19.14 Unsurprisingly, in light of the characteristics of the City Centre, provision of open space does not meet minimum standard with the exception of amenity space, where an additional 1,052 residents could be accommodated before additional space was required.
- 19.15 As highlighted, while these standards suggest that there deficiencies in provision, it is important to consider the character of the City Centre and the appropriateness of provision, as well as the interrelationship with civic spaces. The civic spaces are well distributed across the City.

- 19.16 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.
- 19.17 Maps 19.3 – 19.6 therefore evaluate the provision of each of the different types of open space across Manchester City Centre. While the quantity is insufficient in many types of open space to meet minimum standards, it can be seen that spaces near to the City Centre are accessible to residents and visitors and little additional provision is therefore required.
- 19.18 Despite this, consultation highlighted the importance of providing additional green space in the City Centre and this should be taken into account in the future development planning of the Centre.

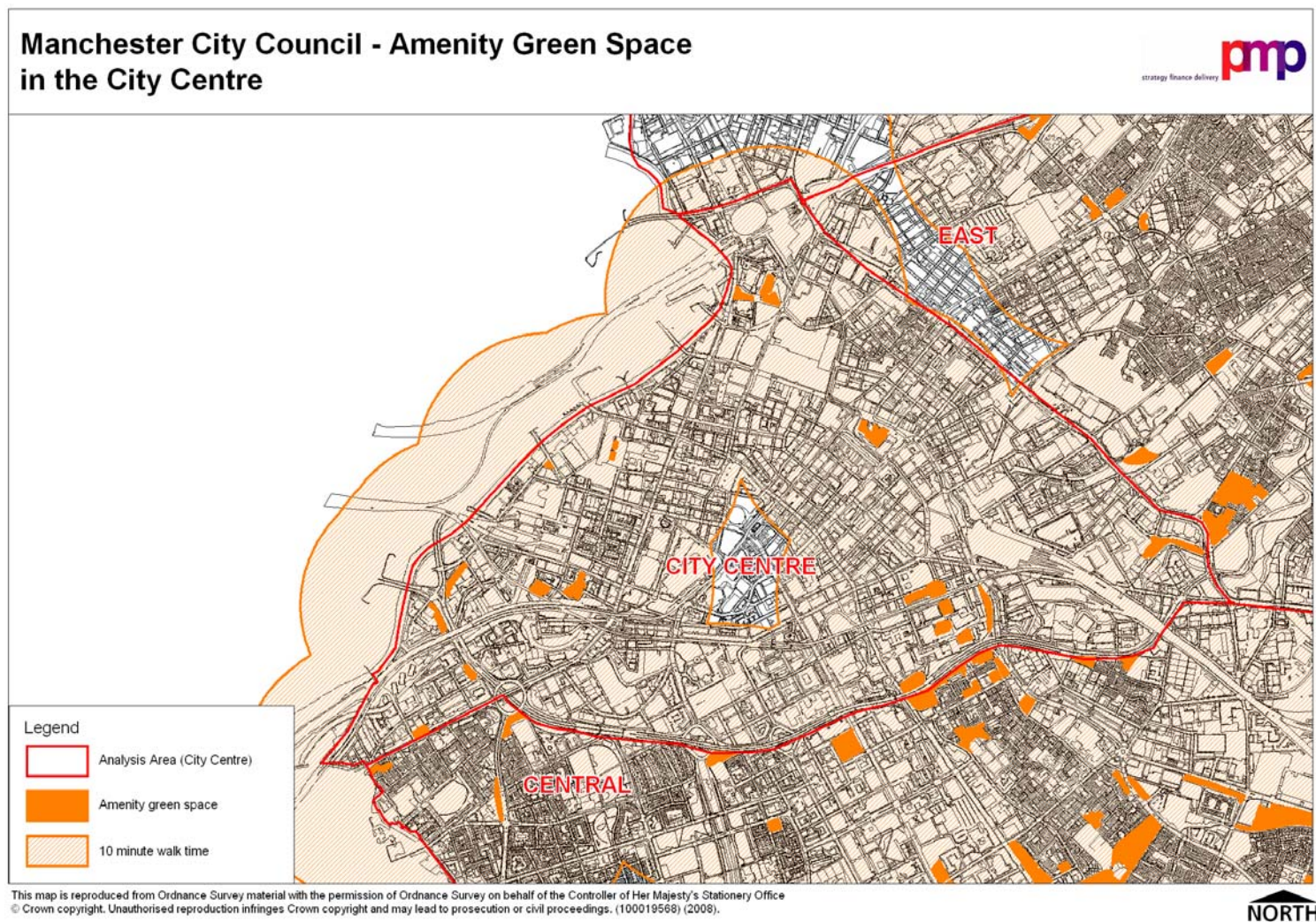
Map 19.3 – Local Parks in Manchester City Centre



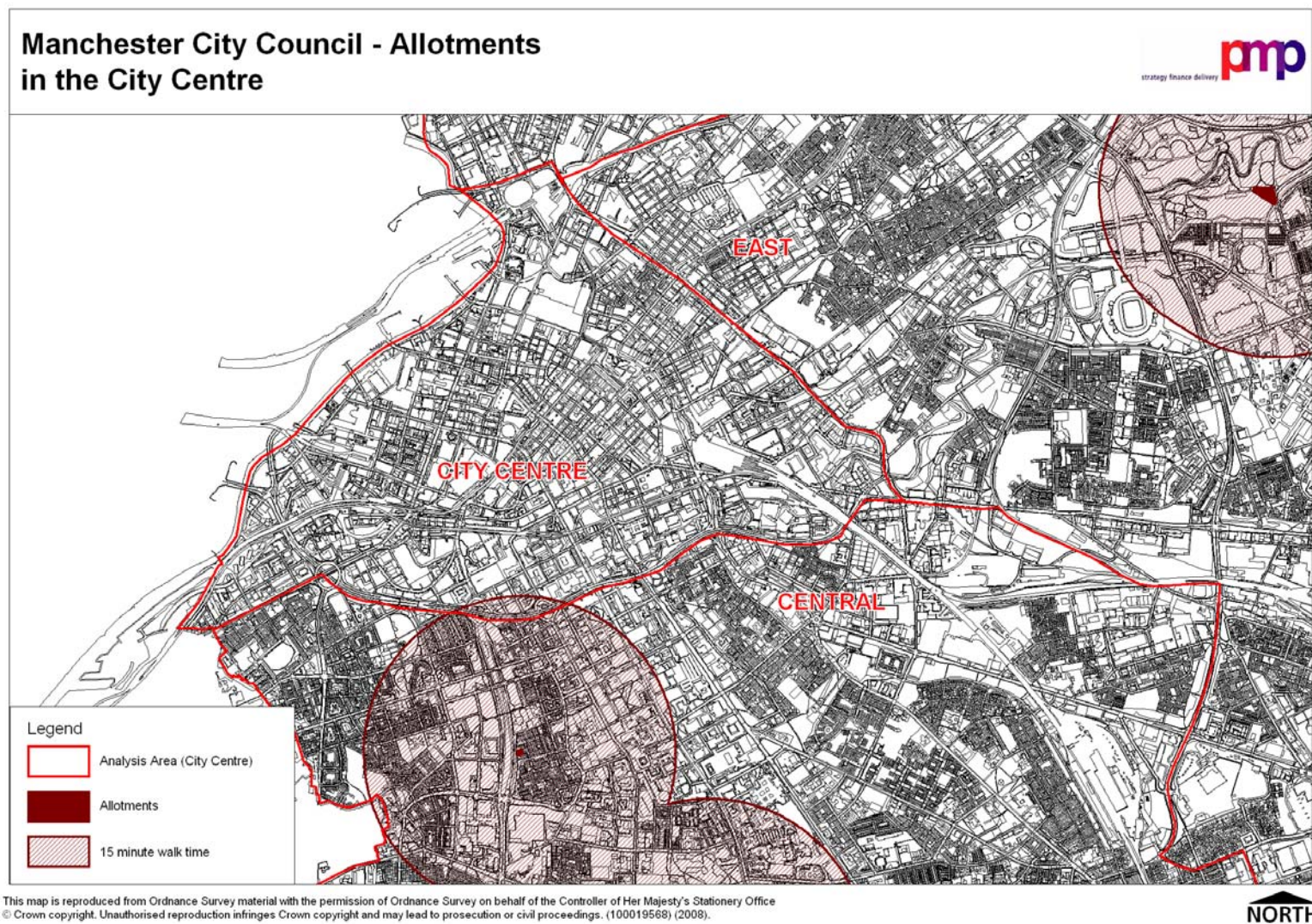
Map 19.4 – Natural and semi natural open space in Manchester City Centre



Map 19.5 – Amenity green space in Manchester City Centre



Map 19.6 – Provision of allotments in Manchester City Centre



Priorities in Manchester City Centre

- 19.19 Table 19.3 summarises the key issues arising in Manchester City Centre with regards open space, sport and recreation facilities.
- 19.20 Due to the dense urban nature of this area, innovative solutions may be needed to offset deficiencies including maximising the role of green corridors, developing green roofs and green walls and creating tree lined streets

Table 19.3– The future delivery of open space, sport and recreation facilities in Manchester City Centre

Open space type	Issues	Recommendations
Parks and Gardens	<p>The City Centre contains the fewest number of parks and application of the quantity standard indicates that there is insufficient provision to meet demand. The current shortfall in the area equates to 3.70 hectares.</p> <p>Despite a quantitative shortfall, accessibility mapping suggests that nearly all areas of the City Centre are within a 10 minute walk of a park / garden, meaning that there is a good distribution of these facilities for residents, workers and visitors to use. As well as parks being evenly distributed in the City Centre, parks in other areas are also within a 10 minute walk from the City Centre.</p> <p>In addition to the high level of access to local parks, residents in the City Centre are also able to reach larger parks such as Heaton Park and Alexandra Park. The City Centre is a public transport hub, which means that access outside of the City Centre area is particularly easy for these residents. The creation of Irwell City Park will also provide additional parkland in the west of the City Centre. In addition to the centrally located parks, there a range of civic spaces across the City Centre area, which to an extent fill the role of parks / amenity spaces. The interrelationship between these types of open space will be explored further in section 12.</p> <p>This even distribution of parks suggests that despite quantitative shortfalls, new provision would not be a priority and that maintaining the quality of existing sites would be the primary future focus. However in order to meet with aspirations that more green space is required in the City Centre, along with the recognition of the role that green spaces play in mitigating climate change and promoting urban cooling, opportunities for the further provision of gardens in this area should be taken.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the quality of the three existing Green Flag parks (Ongoing) • Promote the development of green linkages connecting the City Centre with parks and open spaces in nearby areas. This may include opening up access to river and canal corridors as well as making links between existing open spaces (Medium term) • Consider the development of an additional park / garden within the City Centre. Green space in the urban environment is particularly important and the provision of such facilities may help in the fight to mitigate climate, This is also particularly important in light of the emphasis placed on this issue during consultation and the perception that parks should form the “green lungs” of the City (Longer term) • Ensure that the location of parks and open spaces are considered as part of any review of the transport network (Longer term).

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Open space type	Issues	Recommendations
	The proposed Irwell Valley Park (in neighbouring authority) will address this issue to an extent.	
Natural and Semi Natural Open Space	<p>Only one natural open space is located in this area (Hunt's Bank). Due to the character of this area and the lack of naturally occurring space, quantity standards have not been applied to this area.</p> <p>Application of the accessibility standard reveals that all residents in the City Centre have access to a natural or semi natural open space within the recommended 15 minute drive time by public transport.</p> <p>Although the lack of quantity standard in this area demonstrates that new provision is not expected, it remains important to maximise local access to these types of open space for residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the development of green linkages connecting residents with natural open spaces in nearby areas. This may include opening up access to river and canal corridors as well as making links between existing open spaces (Short to medium term / ongoing).
Amenity Green Space	<p>Application of the quantity standard indicates that there is sufficient provision to meet demand. Based on the current provision, a population growth of 1052 can be accommodated.</p> <p>Accessibility mapping reinforces this sufficient provision, with all residents able to access an amenity green space within the recommended 10 minute walk time. Furthermore, in addition to amenity green spaces, residents in the City Centre (and visitors) have access to a vast array of civic spaces, which fulfil a similar role to amenity spaces.</p> <p>The quality of amenity green space in the City Centre is good, with the average quality score of a site being 84%. However, consultation emphasised the importance of amenity green space in the City Centre and due to a lack of open space in this area, the quality of this type of open space will be particularly important.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drive a programme of improvements to the quality of existing amenity spaces. This should overlap with improvements to the civic spaces in the City (Short term) In light of the strong theme of the need to provide additional green space in the City Centre, consider the provision of new amenity spaces where opportunities arise, either through the provision of traditional amenity spaces or through alternative solutions such as roof gardens (Short to medium term) Monitor the impact of population growth on the demand for additional amenity space across the City Centre (Ongoing).

Open space type	Issues	Recommendations
	<p>While analysis of the accessibility and quantity standards demonstrates that there is currently sufficient provision, in light of the strong theme during consultations of the need to provide additional green space within the City Centre, opportunities for new provision (or new ideas such as green roofs) should be sought. In the short term, qualitative improvements should be prioritised.</p>	
Provision for Children	<p>There are no children's play areas located within the City Centre and application of the quantity standard that there is a shortfall equivalent to 0.26 hectares. Based on the average size of a play area in Manchester, the current shortfall equates to over two facilities.</p> <p>Accessibility mapping reinforces this shortfall with only a small number of residents in the south of the City Centre able to access a play area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide one – two new facilities for children in the City Centre. These facilities should meet with quality design criteria and be large enough to sustain use by both residents and visitors.
Provision for Young People	<p>As with children's play areas, there are no facilities for young people located within the City Centre. The total quantitative shortfall in the area equates to 0.34 hectares, which is approximately three facilities (based on the average size of a facility).</p> <p>Like the provision for children, accessibility mapping illustrates this shortfall, with very few residents within the appropriate distance of a facility.</p> <p>Despite shortfalls in provision for young people, civic spaces and amenity green spaces provide young people with informal areas to gather. This was a key cause for concern during consultations, and therefore dedicated facilities for young people in the City Centre should be prioritised.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide at least two dedicated facilities / areas for young people within the City Centre to cater for both residents and visitors and also to meet the needs of the growing population in this area. The sites should offer a range of opportunities in order to maximize usage of the sites and reduce the knock on impact on other open spaces.

Open space type	Issues	Recommendations
Outdoor Sports Facilities	<p>There are no outdoor sports facilities located within the City Centre and hence provision is below the recommended minimum standard.</p> <p>The growing population in the City Centre will generate increased demand for outdoor sports facilities over the LDF period and the unmet demand will therefore rise.</p> <p>The nature of the City Centre and the land required for sports facilities means that provision in the City Centre area is particularly challenging and there are few opportunities to provide appropriate facilities. While any opportunities in this area should be taken, this emphasises the importance of ensuring that there is adequate provision in nearby areas to accommodate residents of the City Centre. In order to facilitate usage, appropriate public transport routes to local facilities should be provided.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that any future improvements to public transport links take into account the need to link residents of the City Centre with nearby outdoor sports facilities.

Summary

- 19.21 While the provision of open space within the City Centre is challenging, it is particularly important in terms of encouraging urban cooling and mitigating climate change. Furthermore, the provision of green spaces reduces flood risk and breaks up the urban landscape.
- 19.22 Canals, towpaths and walkways in the City Centre provide an invaluable network of green corridors. This network ensures that residents are able to access open spaces outside of the City Centre through the use of green linkages.
- 19.23 Analysis of existing provision in the City Centre indicates that there are shortfalls in the provision of most types of open space with the exception of amenity spaces. The area is also well blessed in terms of civic spaces and public realm.
- 19.24 Despite the identified deficiencies, access to many facilities outside of the City Centre area is good. The main exception to this is provision for children and young people, where new provision may be required.
- 19.25 Outside of these typologies, the key focus for future provision will be on improving the quality of existing sites and developing green linkages to nearby open spaces.
- 19.26 Current regeneration plans in both the City Centre and within the Oxford Road corridor will further improve the quality and quantity of open spaces which are accessible to residents in the City Centre.