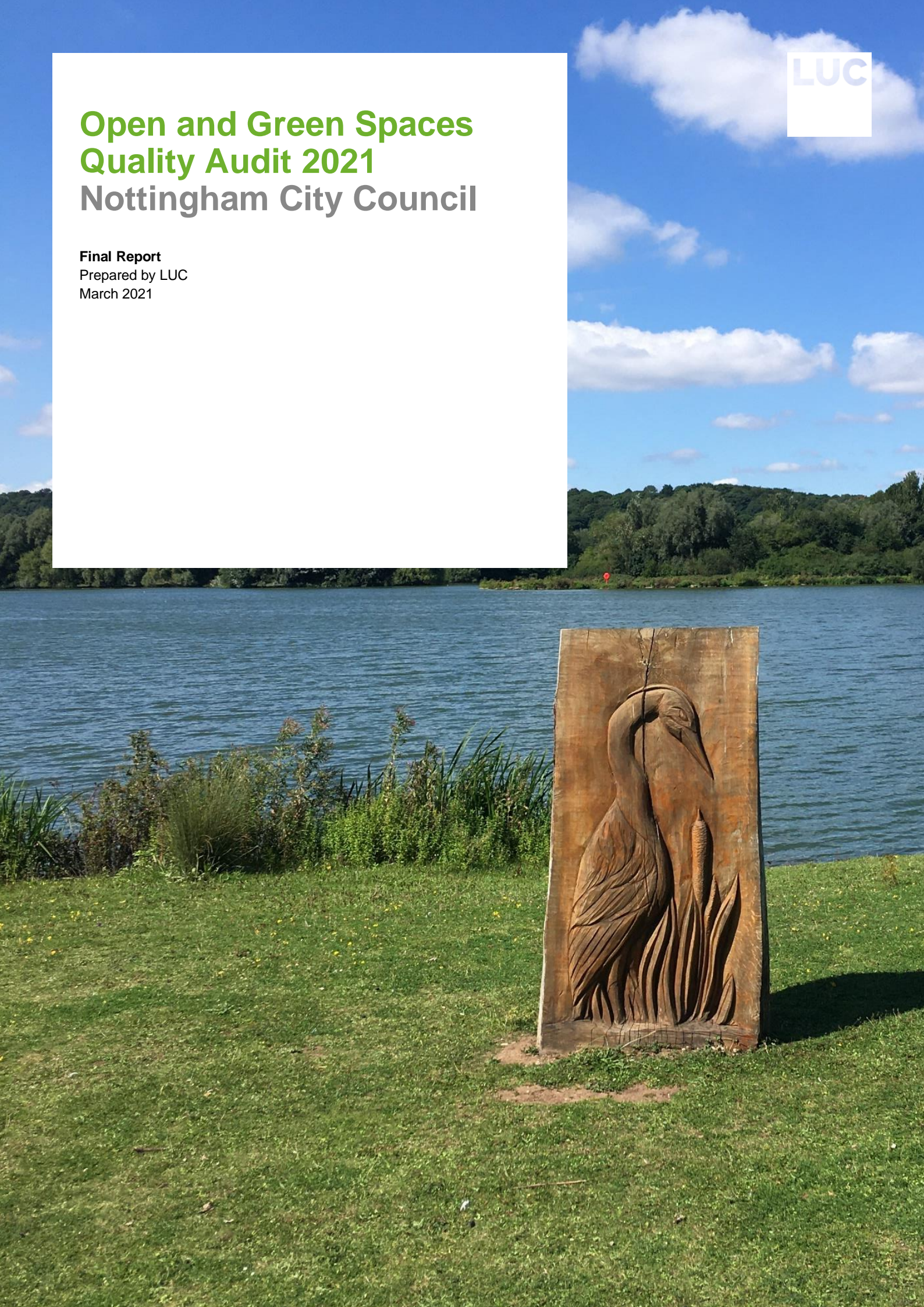


# Open and Green Spaces Quality Audit 2021 Nottingham City Council

**Final Report**  
Prepared by LUC  
March 2021



# Open and Green Spaces Quality Audit 2021

## Nottingham City Council

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# Chapter 1

## Executive Summary

### Purpose of this study

**1.1** Nottingham City Council commissioned LUC to undertake an Open and Green Space Quality Audit which will inform the new strategic framework for managing open and green spaces in the city. The framework, which will date until 2050, will highlight the range of benefits provided by open spaces; including climate change adaptation and mitigation, health and well-being and biodiversity enhancement within public parks. In addition, this work will provide an important evidence base to support the delivery of the Local Plan Part 2 (Proposed Main Modifications Version May 2019). The audit of open and green space will provide a critical strand of this evidence to help ensure that residents are able to access a local network of parks and open spaces to help improve their health and quality of life.

**1.2** This report provides a comprehensive audit and needs assessment of open and green space within Nottingham, reviewed against prescribed standards. The main objectives for this study are to:

- Provide a comprehensive audit of open and green spaces within the city;
- Identify accessibility, quantity and quality standards based on the audit and compare against relevant standards as well as the Council's 2008 audit;
- Review existing consultations and information to assess the views and expectations of residents;
- Identify any surpluses and deficiencies in open space, including where the current and future need for these spaces lie;
- Provide a technical appendix including a brief summary of the existing information; methodology for the audit; the needs assessment for open and green space; quantity and quality assessment of green and open space and provision standards.

**1.3** The findings of the report should allow the Council to plan for the adequate provision of high quality, accessible open space in order to meet the future needs of the local community.

## Approach to the study

**1.4** There are 492 sites totalling approximately 2,472ha throughout the boundary of Nottingham City. 385 sites were visited, with detailed audits based on the Green Flag Award themes completed at 344 of these sites.

**1.5** Of the total quantity of open space, approximately 1,215ha are considered accessible. In addition to this, there are approximately 133ha of Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms in Nottingham City.

**1.6** Sites were given scores for:

- 'value' (the presence of various features and facilities, and value to the local community); or
- 'quality' (aspects relating to management and the condition of features and facilities).

**1.7** The 'quantity' of sites (the overall amount of a particular typology) was also calculated to highlight any oversupply, sufficiency or deficiencies.

**1.8** These sites were categorised according to typology (based on the primary 'functions' of the open space) and hierarchy, based on the size of the open space.

### Nottingham Open Space Typologies

- Parks and Gardens;
- Natural and Semi Natural;
- Amenity Green Space;
- Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms;
- Cemeteries, Churches and Disused Churchyards;
- Provision for Children and Young People; and
- Outdoor Sports Facility.

**1.9** The results of an online Parks and Open Spaces consultation survey as part of the Future Parks Accelerator programme has informed this study. The consultation aimed to provide an in-depth understanding of the existing and proposed performance of parks and open spaces in Nottingham City.

## Key findings

**1.10** Nottingham City as a whole benefits from an extensive network of open space. All of the city boasts access to at least two levels of hierarchy and the majority of the city is deficient to just one level of hierarchy. However, clusters that are deficient in two or more hierarchy levels exist within the city. These areas are generally located at the city's northern extent, including Bulwell, Bulwell Forest and Bestwood. Other clusters of deficiency are located on the western edge of Bilborough

and Wollaton West, in Leen on the boundary of Berridge and Sherwood, and in Mapperley.

**1.11** A range of barriers exist to access across Nottingham City; including large roads, railway lines, canals and rivers. The A roads and railway generally run north to south and east to west, while the watercourses follow the railway line north-south and create a barrier between Clifton West and Clifton East in the south and the rest of the city. Rivers and canals may improve access to open spaces in some locations.

**1.12** The majority of Nottingham City affords access to six Destination Parks and Gardens within the city. Wollaton Park, Victoria Embankment and Highfields Park primarily provide access to the western and southern parts of the city and these are scored as having higher quality and value. However, access to Destination Parks and Gardens is lacking in the north of the city. The northern parts of Bulwell Forest and Bulwell are not within the access buffer of any Destination Parks and Gardens.

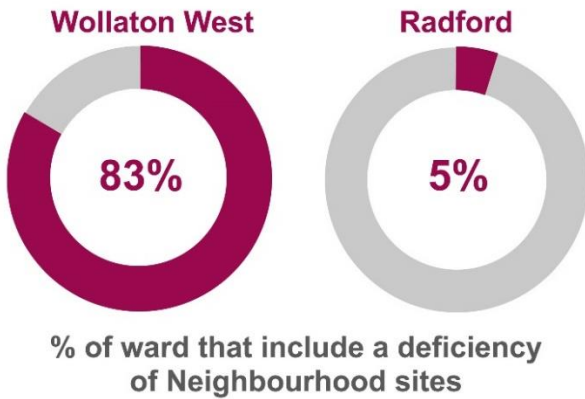


% of ward that include a deficiency of Destination sites

**1.13** Provision of City Parks and Gardens is greatest in the north of the city, with the majority of Bulwell, Bulwell Forest, Bestwood, Clifton East, Basford and Aspley lying within the 1km buffer of a City Park and Garden. However, there is a deficiency in City Parks and Gardens in Dales, Mapperley, Leen Valley, Wollaton West, Radford, Clifton West and Clifton East where all, or most of the ward is outside the 1km buffer of a City Park and Garden.

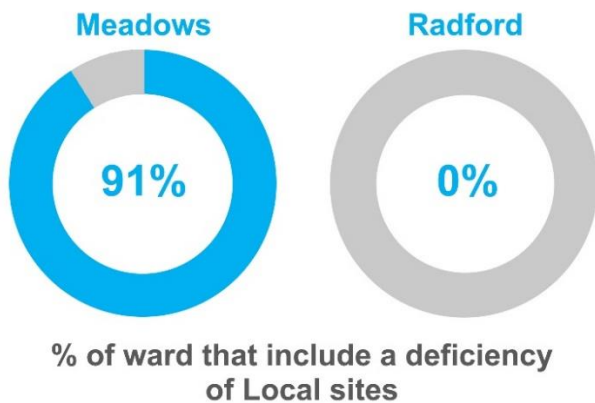


% of ward that include a deficiency of City sites



**1.14** In general, access to Neighbourhood Parks and Gardens in Nottingham is widespread. However, there are notable deficiencies in Dales ward, and the southern part of Lenton and Wollaton East. In addition, Wollaton West is primarily within the access buffer of Wollaton Park which is restricted by opening hours.

**1.15** There is near universal access to Local Parks and Gardens in the northern half of the city, with almost all areas within the 600m access buffer. There is very limited provision for Local Parks and Gardens in Dales and Meadows ward. The southern part of Lenton and Wollaton East also has very restricted access to Local Parks and Gardens, although the majority of this land is non-residential.



**1.16** The majority of the city has access to the largest Natural and Semi Natural green spaces, although there are some gaps in access within Wollaton West, Bilborough and Mapperley wards. The whole of Nottingham City has access to local Natural and Semi Natural green spaces. The sites are evenly spread across the city.

**1.17** Variable access exists to Amenity Green Spaces, with all wards experiencing a deficiency in access. Surveyed Amenity Green Spaces are clustered in the north and centre, with no access in southern wards including Clifton East, Clifton West, Lenton and Wollaton East and Meadows.

**1.18** There is generally good access to Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms throughout the city, although there is some deficiency in Bestwood in the north east and Lenton and Wollaton East in the west.

**1.19** As defined within the play hierarchy criteria detailed in Table 7.3, the city is comprised of a series of 'playable spaces'. The majority of Nottingham City lies within the 60 minutes pedestrian walking time buffer of destination playable spaces. However, significant pockets exist within Nottingham City which are outwith the 15 minutes pedestrian walking buffer of city playable spaces, including large areas of Bulwell in the north, Castle and Meadows in the south.

**1.20** Open space standards have been set to provide a benchmark against which each site may be assessed. Applying these standards provides a high-level overview of how open spaces are 'performing' across the city. A summary of the quality and value standards with example sites are provided in the tables below:

Higher Quality / Higher Value	Higher Quality / Lower Value
++	+-
<p>These sites are considered to be the best open spaces within the city, offering the greatest value and quality for the surrounding communities.</p> <p>Future management should seek to maintain the standard for these spaces and ensure they continue to meet the requirements for the communities they serve.</p> <p>Ideally all spaces should fit into this category.</p>	<p>Wherever possible, the preferred management approach to a space in this category should aim to enhance its value in terms of its present primary typology or purpose.</p> <p>If this is not possible, the best policy approach is to consider whether it might be of high value if converted to another typology.</p>
Lower Quality / Higher Value	Lower Quality / Lower Value
-+	--
<p>These spaces meet or exceed the required value standard but fall below the required quality standard.</p> <p>Future management should therefore seek to enhance their quality to ensure that the open spaces are welcoming and safe for use by the local community.</p>	<p>These spaces are falling below the applicable value and quality standards and therefore their future enhancement should be considered to be a priority.</p>

Example site	Higher Quality / Higher Value	Higher Quality / Lower Value	Lower Quality / Higher Value	Lower Quality / Lower Value
	++	+	+	--
Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms	Bagthorpe Allotments	Mapperley Road Allotments	Merevale Allotments	Bar Lane Allotments
City Natural and Semi Natural	Martin's Pond LNR	Brecks Plantation - 1	Sellers Wood LNR	City Natural and Semi Natural
Neighbourhood Natural and Semi Natural	Iremongers Pond	Valley Road Park - Water Meadow	Moorbridge Pond	Stanton Tip
Local Natural and Semi Natural	Alexandria Plantation LNR	Gardendale Plantation	Churchfield Plantation	Hucknall Road Open Space - 2
Destination Parks and Garden	Wollaton Park	N / A	N / A	Arboretum
City Parks and Garden	Forest Recreation Ground	Bilborough Park	Bulwell Bogs	Southglade Park
Neighbourhood Parks and Garden	Bulwell Forest Recreation Ground	St Mary's Rest Garden	King George V Park	City Heights Open Space
Local Parks and Garden	Chediston Vale Park	Firbeck Road Open Space	N / A	Hazel Hill Crescent Open Space
Amenity Green Space	Torville Drive Open Space	Jersey Gardens	Lancaster Way Open Space	Tricketts Yard Open Space
Outdoor Sports Facility	N / A	N / A	N / A	Clifton Playing Fields
Cemeteries, Churches and Disused Churchyards	General Cemetery	St Martin's Church	Church Cemetery (Rock Cemetery)	Bestwood Park Church

space and play. Open space standards set out as part of the open space and green audit should be incorporated into planning policies and cross referenced within other relevant policies. Policies should set out the circumstances that new development will need to provide open space / play space on-site, off-site, or provide financial contributions towards improving existing open space.

- Ensure that the findings of the audit are used to inform green space improvement programmes. Ensure that investment needs are included within updates of the Nottingham Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- Consider establishing processes for periodic review and update of the data for green spaces in the city. Any new green spaces should be captured as part of the GIS data set that has been updated as part of this audit.
- It would be valuable to undertake more detailed or 'fine grained' analysis for the quantity (ha/1,000 residents) of green space throughout the city. This could include:
  - Assessing the performance of defined geographic areas against the quantity standards set out in this report;
  - Using projected population data to assess the likely future performance of the city against the quantity standard. This can be used to predict likely future greenspace needs.
- Establish processes for assessing the need for additional green space as part of new development. It is recommended that developers are required to undertake an assessment of the impact of proposals on green space provision. Proposals should set out how local needs for open space and play will be met.

## Next steps and recommendations

**1.21** The findings of this audit provide the basis for developing and updating the council's policies associated with publicly accessible open space and play space. The council should consider implementing the following actions:

- Review and update of any relevant planning policies, procedures, and supplementary guidance on open



## Chapter 2

### Introduction

#### Background

**2.1** The need for high quality, multifunctional, accessible green space in our towns and cities has never been more important, as brought into focus by the Covid-19 pandemic. Nottingham has a historic network of open and green space contributing to its image as a green city. However, there is a need for a clear vision and direction for these green spaces to create a long-term sustainable network. A comprehensive evidence base is the starting point for achieving this vision.

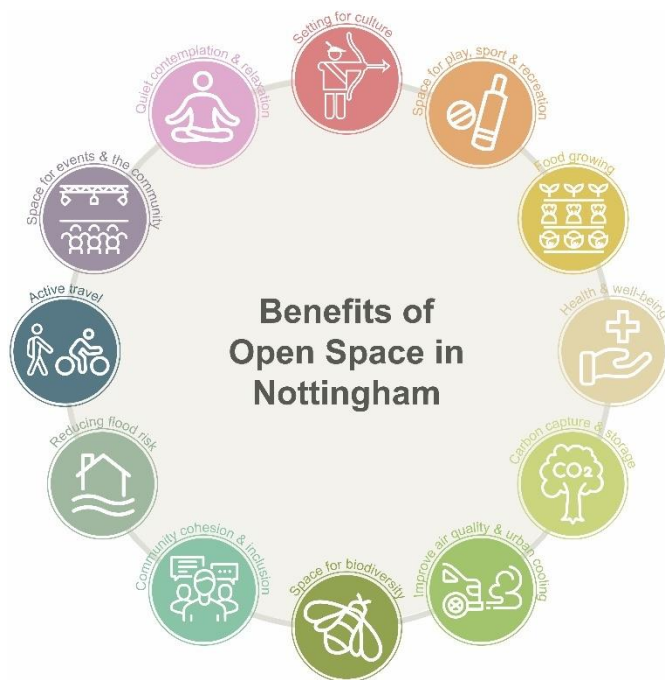
**2.2** Nottingham City Council (herein referred to as the 'Council') commissioned LUC to undertake an Open and Green Space Quality Audit which will inform the new strategic framework for managing open and green spaces in the city. The framework, which will date until 2050, will highlight the range of benefits provided by open spaces; including climate change adaptation and mitigation, health and well-being, biodiversity enhancement and preventing biodiversity loss wherever possible within public parks. In addition, this work will provide an important evidence base to support the delivery of the Local Plan Part 2 (Proposed Main Modifications Version May 2019). The audit of open and green space will provide a critical strand of this evidence to help ensure that residents are able to access a local network of parks and open spaces to help improve their health and quality of life.

**2.3** Comprised of a historic network of open and green spaces which account for over 25% of the city's area, Nottingham forms the largest urban area in the East Midlands with a population of approximately 305,680 people. The majority of these spaces consist of public Parks and Gardens, sports grounds, Cemeteries, Churches and Disused Churchyards, Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms, Natural and Semi Natural green space and green corridors, most of which are 0.5ha or less in size. The city also hosts a number of large Parks and Gardens which play important roles in providing access to nature for Nottingham's residents, including Wollaton Park, Colwick Country Park and Bulwell Hall Park.

**2.4** Nottingham has a proud cultural and historic legacy, with open spaces playing an integral role in delivering the city's schedule of cultural events. Nottingham Castle hosts a series of outdoor theatre shows within the summer months, Forest Recreation Ground is home to the annual Goose fair and the large inner-city open space of Wollaton Park sees an annual

schedule of music events, country shows and cross country. Nottingham's network of open and green spaces also significantly contributes to the mental and physical health of the city's residents through the creation of space for exercise, leisure, relaxation and social interaction. Furthermore, they provide a range of other benefits and perform a crucial role in the delivery of various environmental services (see **Figure 5.1:**).

Figure 2.1: Benefits of open space in Nottingham



## Study aims and objectives

**2.5** This report provides a comprehensive audit and needs assessment of open and green space within Nottingham, reviewed against prescribed standards. The main objectives for this study are to:

- Provide a comprehensive audit of open and green spaces within the city;
- Identify accessibility, quantity and quality standards based on the audit and compare against relevant standards as well as the Council's 2008 audit;
- Review existing consultations and information to assess the views and expectations of residents;
- Identify any surpluses and deficiencies in open space, including where the current and future need for these spaces lie;
- Provide a technical appendix including a brief summary of the existing information; methodology for the audit; the

needs assessment for open and green space; quantity and quality assessment of green and open space and provision standards.

**2.6** The findings of the report will allow the Council to plan for the adequate provision of high quality, accessible open space in order to meet the future needs of the local community.

## Structure of this report

**2.7** The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 3** sets out the study methodology.
- **Chapter 4** sets out the planning policy framework within which this study has been undertaken and sets out the strategic context for the assessment.
- **Chapter 5** provides detail on the socio-economic and demographic context in Nottingham to build up a picture of the needs of Nottingham's residents;
- **Chapter 6** sets out the findings of the consultation undertaken for this study.
- **Chapter 7** sets out the findings of the open space quantity assessment.
- **Chapter 8** sets out the findings of the quality and value assessment; informed by site surveys undertaken in August 2020.
- **Chapter 9** provides an approach to developing local standards for Nottingham and then sets out the results of applying these standards.
- **Chapter 10** sets out the approach to developing a framework for providing healthy, active open space in Nottingham.

## Chapter 3

### Methodology

**3.1** The methodology for the assessment of open spaces in Nottingham reflects the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) and has been informed by recognised guidance on planning for open space and play space. The methodology followed five key stages, as set out in **Figure 3.1**:. Each step is described in detail below.

#### Stage 1a: Identifying local needs

##### Structured document review

**3.2** A review of relevant national, regional and local planning policy was undertaken in order to develop an understanding of the Nottingham city context, and any land use implications relating to open space. Emerging Local Plan policies were reviewed and the range of existing evidence base documents relevant to this work interrogated. A detailed breakdown of the relevant studies collated as a basis for structured review is included in **Chapter 4**.

**3.3** To further understand the specific needs of the city, the desk study also included an assessment of trends. This incorporated an analysis of estimated future changes as a result of population growth, review of growth patterns in the city, evaluation of the characteristics of the population as well as health and wellbeing indicators. These findings were used to add value and provide an overview in order to advise of the implications for open space in Nottingham. The report provides commentary on the existing approach of the Council, benchmarking recommendations against national and regional guidance and neighbouring approaches.

##### Consultation

**3.4** The NPPF states that open spaces assessments should be undertaken with an understanding of local needs, achieved through comprehensive consultation. Hosted on an online survey platform and promoted through the Council website, the findings of the Parks and Open Spaces Survey were reviewed to inform the understanding of need within the city and to help determine local provision standards. The data was used to understand the attitudes and expectations of Nottingham residents with regard to the provision of open space in the city.

Figure 3.1: Open and green space methodology



**3.5** Emerging evidence developed through the Future Parks Accelerator project, including levels of parks and open space usage in the city, perceived barriers to access and social capacity information were also reviewed.

## Stage 1b: Needs assessment

### Review of all relevant consultation material

**3.6** The needs assessment provides an evaluation of the quality, quantity and accessibility across all hierarchies and typologies of open space. This stage also involved the review of recent consultations to identify implications of existing strategies, gaps or opportunities. These consultations include:

- Results of the Parks and Open Spaces Survey that is currently live and other surveys delivered through the Parks and Open Spaces team;
- Local Plan and SPDs (Part 1 – Core Strategy, Policies 16, 17, 19; Local Plan Part 2, LAPP, Policies DE4, EN2, EN4, IN4);
- Adjoining local authorities and Nottinghamshire County Council; and
- All relevant consultation undertaken by the Council as part of the Playing Pitch Strategy 2018.

**3.7** In addition, a review of demographic data, including health and well-being indicators, was undertaken to ensure an in depth understanding of the context of the city and its communities.

**3.8** A systematic approach was adopted to review the evidence in order to identify the following information:

- The needs of local residents, now and in the future, in relation to open space provision and major barriers that limit access;
- Perceptions and attitudes towards the quality, value and accessibility of open space throughout the city;
- The most used and popular open spaces and play facilities.
- Expectations with regards to accessibility of different types of open space, for instance how far people are willing to walk/travel to different types of open space or play facilities;
- A broad understanding of management needs. How long it takes them to get to the open space, and what activities they carry out in the open space.

## Stage 2: Auditing local provision

**3.9** A system of site audits was undertaken in order to assess each open space in terms of accessibility, quantity and quality / value of provision. This stage was divided into two main tasks; the quantity audit and the quality audit.

### Quantity audit (update from 2008 study)

**3.10** Primarily a desk-based GIS capture exercise, this stage included the collation and review of existing data on open spaces within the city. Several data sets were provided by the Council, which were then updated and cross referenced with other contextual data sets, aerial imagery, Ordnance Survey Greenspace layers, planning application data and internet research.

**3.11** These sites were categorised according to typology (based on the primary 'functions' of the open space) and hierarchy, based on the size of the open space.

#### Nottingham Open Space Typologies

- Parks and Gardens;
- Natural and Semi Natural;
- Amenity Green Space;
- Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms;
- Cemeteries, Churches and Disused Churchyards;
- Provision for Children and Young People; and
- Outdoor Sports Facility.

### Quality Assessment (Site audits)

**3.12** Site audits were undertaken on a selection of Nottingham's open spaces. All open spaces in the following typologies were audited:

- Parks and Gardens;
- Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms;
- Cemeteries, Churches and Disused Churchyards; and
- Provision for Children and Young People.

**3.13** In addition, all Natural and Semi Natural sites which appeared accessible (following a desk-based review) were audited. A number of Amenity Green Spaces were also audited either due to a request by the Council or if the site contained play features.

**3.14** Utilising a system of site assessments, a robust and objective analysis of the quality and value of the different types of open space within the city was undertaken. 385 open spaces were visited during August and September 2020 and 344 open spaces audited utilising the Green Flag Award criteria.

**3.15** The audit assessed audited sites in terms of accessibility, quantity and quality / value of provision, affording direct comparisons with the previous audit to identify changes. The detailed audit forms allowed the collection of information on the range of features and facilities present (Value), and the condition of features and management aspects (Quality). The form followed the Green Flag Award themes whilst ensuring compatibility with the previous 2008 study to inform a robust assessment of provision.

#### Green Flag Award Themes

- A welcoming place
- Healthy, safe and secure
- Clean and well maintained
- Sustainability
- Conservation and heritage
- Community involvement
- Marketing

**3.16** The purpose of the audit was to highlight any changes in deficiency or over provision within the city. Information was collected in a format to allow benchmarks to be established and the success of the sites, both individually and collectively, measured against those benchmarks. Site audits were undertaken using GIS-enabled tablets for data collection purposes. The exact location of play spaces; including children's play facilities, Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) and provision for teenagers was recorded during the site audits. An assessment of the play and recreational value of each of the parks and open spaces was undertaken to gain an understanding of how the network can contribute to promoting active lifestyles.

**3.17** Appendix A contains an example audit form whilst the audit form scoring system is outlined in Appendix B.

### Stage 3: Provision Standards

**3.18** Following the audit of local provision, open space standards for quantity, quality, value and accessibility were proposed. The development of the standards considered the consultation findings and the assessment of local need in Nottingham.

#### Setting quantity, quality, value, and accessibility standards

##### Quantity standards

**3.19** A quantity standard was set for publicly accessible open space (which includes Parks and Gardens, Natural and Semi Natural and Amenity Green Space), expressed as hectares per 1,000 people. The results of the quantity assessment were

informed by the results of the needs assessment, best practice guidance as well as standards adopted by comparable authorities.

##### Quality and value standards

**3.20** Standards were set for quality and value, providing a benchmark against which each site could be assessed, as well as ensuring that sites are compared 'like for like' with sites that would be expected to provide a similar 'offer'. The quality and value standards were developed through an understanding of what should be expected of each type of open space in Nottingham and are intended to be both aspirational yet realistically achievable.

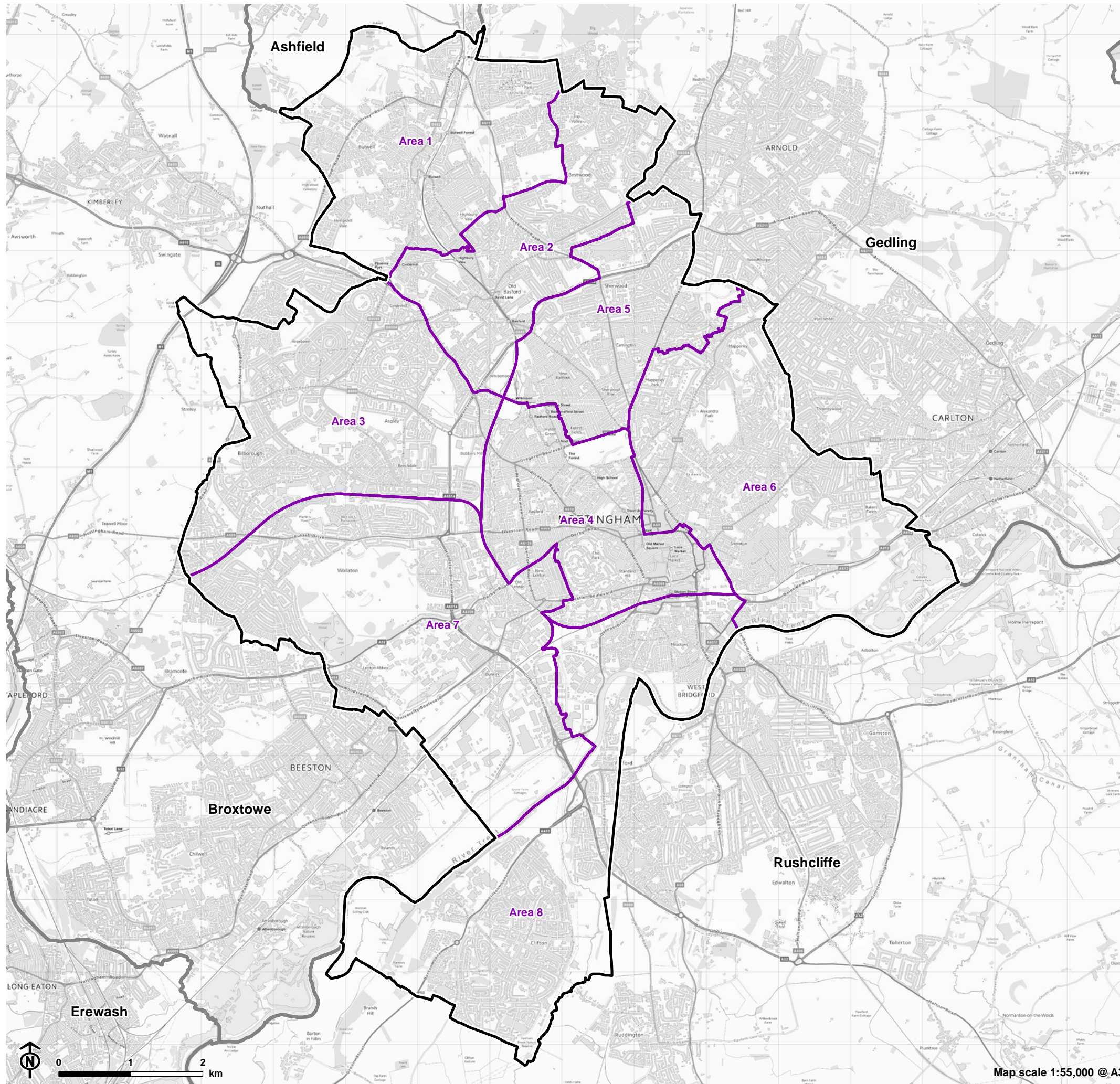
##### Accessibility standards

**3.21** Accessibility standards were assessed for each type of open space and level of hierarchy, based on a review of the existing standards, good practice guidance and the results of the consultation exercise. Accessibility catchment areas were expressed as straight line 'walk-time' distances. The standards were applied and indicated as a series of buffers in order to highlight areas deficient in access to each typology and level of size hierarchy. Maps were also analysed in order to develop an understanding of accessibility across the city, taking into account major physical features that would be considered to form barriers to access.

#### Applying quantity, quality, value, and accessibility standards

**3.22** The application of the proposed standards provides an overview of current open and green space provision in Nottingham. For the purposes of understanding spatial variation in the city, the study area has been divided into the Area Committees shown in Figure 3.2:.

Figure 3.2: Study Areas



- Nottingham City
- Neighbouring local authority
- Area committee

### Quality and value standards

**3.23** The audit form results for open and play spaces were compared to the relevant quality and value benchmarks (typology and hierarchy) and categorised as per the following:

Higher Quality / Higher Value	Higher Quality / Lower Value
++	+-
<p>These sites are considered to be the best open spaces within the city, offering the greatest value and quality for the surrounding communities.</p> <p>Future management should seek to maintain the standard for these spaces and ensure they continue to meet the requirements for the communities they serve.</p> <p>Ideally all spaces should fit into this category.</p>	<p>Wherever possible, the preferred management approach to a space in this category should aim to enhance its value in terms of its present primary typology or purpose.</p> <p>If this is not possible, the best policy approach is to consider whether it might be of high value if converted to another typology.</p>
Lower Quality / Higher Value	Lower Quality / Lower Value
-+	--
<p>These spaces meet or exceed the required value standard but fall below the required quality standard.</p> <p>Future management should therefore seek to enhance their quality to ensure that the open spaces are welcoming and safe for use by the local community.</p>	<p>These spaces are falling below the applicable value and quality standards and therefore their future enhancement should be considered to be a priority.</p>

**3.24** Applying the same methodology as the 2008 audit, a quality score was generated and calibrated to allow for direct comparisons with the previous study, providing an indication of the degree of change.

### Accessibility standards

**3.25** Accessibility standards (expressed as straight line 'walk-time' distances) were applied in GIS producing a series of maps showing buffers around the boundaries of open spaces. This analysis was used to indicate areas which have poor access to different types of open space at various levels of the hierarchy.

## Stage 4: Recommendations and Reporting

### Identifying opportunities

**3.26** The results and data from auditing the provision and setting local standards were utilised to identify areas which are experiencing deficiency or surplus and analysis took place

over geographical areas. This included a comparison to the results of the 2008 audit.

**3.27** This was used to identify opportunities for new, innovative and high-quality open and green spaces.

### Reporting

**3.28** The findings and data gathered in the above tasks were used to identify areas of Nottingham which are experiencing deficiencies or surplus in open space in relation to quantity, quality, value and accessibility. The assessment was made with reference to demographic information and local issues, including growth projections to 2050.

**3.29** The findings of the study were compared with the results of the 2008 Open Space Audit to determine where best to focus future interventions. Using the results of the projected population growth, socio-demographic trends, trends in the popularity of different activities and the impact of planning and other Council policies and of currently planned new provision, the future needs of the city for open space were established.

**3.30** Recommendations were developed in relation to the following key issues:

- Addressing future open and play space needs through planning;
- Areas of focus for open space and management improvements based on site audit data.
- Highlighting areas that would benefit from improvements to open space provision;
- Policy direction for open space, equipped and informal play; and
- a framework to support decision-making around prioritisation for investment and developer contributions.



## Chapter 4

# Planning policy and strategic context

**4.1** The following section sets out the strategic context for the study as well as a review of relevant national, regional and local policy and guidance.

### National planning policy

#### 25 Year Environment Plan

**4.2** The 25 Year Environment Plan (YEP)<sup>1</sup>, published in 2018, sets out the Government's support for habitat creation, multi-functional sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDs), and natural spaces close to where people live and work. It represents an important shift in thinking towards long term positive action to improve people's lives and the environment. It views the planning system as a key mechanism for delivering upon its ambitions. The first action of the 25 Year Environment Plan, seeks to embed an 'environmental net gain' principle into development:

*"We want to establish strategic, flexible and locally tailored approaches that recognise the relationship between the quality of the environment and development. That will enable us to achieve measurable improvements for the environment – 'environmental net gains' – while ensuring economic growth and reducing costs, complexity and delays for developers."*

**4.3** It goes on to state that the Government wants:

*"to expand the net gain approaches used for biodiversity to include wider natural capital benefits, such as flood protection, recreation and improved water and air quality. They will enable local planning authorities to target environmental enhancements that are needed most in their areas and give flexibility to developers in providing them."*

#### The Environment Bill

**4.4** The landmark Environment Bill (2019-2021) sets out to place the ambitions of the 25YEP on statutory footing, by creating a new governance framework for the environment, to ensure a 'cleaner, greener and more resilient country for the

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<sup>1</sup> HM Government (2018) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment

next generation' as the UK leaves the EU. The Bill is currently being considered by a Public Bill Committee which is scheduled to report by 01 December 2020.

**4.5** The provisions of the draft Bill require biodiversity net gains (BNG) to be demonstrated and emerging metrics such as the DEFRA 2.0 will become commonly used when assessing planning applications. There is also a provision for off-site provision of biodiversity enhancements, which may provide an additional funding mechanism for Green Infrastructure (GI) improvements in the local area. The Bill will also support the establishment of 'Nature Recovery Strategies' and give communities a greater say in the protection of local trees.

**Green Infrastructure definition within in the Nation Planning Policy Framework:**

*'A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.'*

**National Planning Policy Framework (2019)<sup>2</sup>**

**Assessing the need for open space**

**4.6** The rationale for undertaking an assessment of open space and play space in the City is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which outlines the relevance of consideration of open space, sport and green infrastructure provision to the development of a Local Plan.

**4.7** Paragraph 91 requires that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places; referencing safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities and high-quality public space as a means to achieving this.

**4.8** Paragraph 92 highlights that planning policies should support social, recreational and cultural facilities and services which the community needs including planning positively for the provision of shared spaces and community facilities such as sports venues and open space.

**4.9** Paragraphs 96 and 97 set out that up-to-date assessments of open space need will be required to support planning policies. These paragraphs also set out the circumstances in which open space can be developed. Paragraph 96 states that the information from the study should

determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is required which "plans should then seek to accommodate."

**4.10** Paragraph 171 states that a strategic approach to plan making should be undertaken to ensure that, within the plan area, networks of habitats and green infrastructure are maintained and enhanced as well as planning for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.

**4.11** Paragraph 181 links the requirement for the identification of green infrastructure provision and enhancement at the plan making stage to the improvement of air quality or mitigation of impacts relating to this issue.

**Loss or replacement of open space**

**4.12** The NPPF (paragraph 97) sets out the only circumstances in which an open space can be developed for different uses. It clarifies that existing open space should not be built on unless:

- an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space to be surplus to requirements; or
- the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

**Protecting, maintaining and enhancing open space**

**4.13** The NPPF provides a mechanism by which local authorities can protect some open spaces under a 'Local Green Space' designation (paragraphs 99, 100 and 101) and sets out that these areas should be managed by policies which are consistent with those for Green Belt. This part of the NPPF also sets out high level criteria for such a designation.

**National Planning Practice Guidance**

**4.14** Planning Practice Guidance provides further detail on the development and implementation of policies within the NPPF. Guidance for *Open space, sport and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space*<sup>3</sup> states that in assessing the need for open space, local authorities should have regard for the duty to cooperate where open space serves a wider area. The guidance also advises that authorities and developers refer to Sport England Guidance in assessing the need for sports and recreation facilities and that

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2019) National Planning Policy Framework

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2014) Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space

(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space>)

they may need to consult Sport England where development has the potential to impact upon such facilities.

**4.15** Planning Practice Guidance 'Natural environment' recognises green infrastructure as a network of natural capital assets (including parks/open space, woodlands, allotments etc.) that provide multiple environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

**4.16** The NPPF requires that a strategic planning approach is taken for GI. The guidance recommends planning authorities prepare GI strategies and frameworks that are evidence based and include assessments of the quality of GI and any gaps in provision.

## Regional context

**4.17** Within Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City, Local Plans are the responsibility of the following borough and district councils:

- Ashfield District Council;
- Bassetlaw District Council;
- Broxtowe Borough Council;
- Gedling Borough Council;
- Mansfield District Council;
- Newark and Sherwood District Council; and
- Rushcliffe Borough Council.

**4.18** The Localism Act and the NPPF requires that strategic planning priorities across local authorities are coordinated and addressed within local plans. Through the 'duty to cooperate', local authorities are required to work in partnership when needed to develop strategic planning policies and strategies.

**4.19** As with many 'two tier' counties, cross boundary planning is particularly concerned with strategic infrastructure planning and services needed to support development proposals in local plans.

## Open space and access

**4.20** Nottinghamshire County Council manages a number of Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and informal green spaces within the county. These sites, in addition to areas of 'open access' land, provide free access to nature for local communities.

**4.21** Nottinghamshire County Council are responsible for managing access to the countryside in partnership with landowners through the Public Rights of Way Network. The County also has a duty to prepare a Rights of Way

Improvement Plan and set up and facilitate a Local Access Forum.

## Green Infrastructure – A Prospectus for Lowland Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire (2017)<sup>4</sup>

**4.22** The Lowland Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Local Nature Partnership was established in 2012 and brings together partners across the region from sectors including business, community, education, environment, health and land management. A prospectus was produced to facilitate the process of promotion and improvement of GI in the region, with the aim of matching new growth in jobs and homes expected between 2017 and 2023. The large conurbations of Nottingham and Derby as well as the urban centres of Mansfield, Ashfield and Chesterfield are encompassed within the prospectus. These areas exhibit a high-quality natural environment, albeit with significant risks which GI can help to address.

### Definition of GI within the prospectus:

*"The network of multi-functional green space, waterbodies and ecological communities, in urban and rural areas, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local people."*

**4.23** The vision for GI in the region includes high quality open spaces which are able to demonstrate the following:

- Connections to built facilities (including town centres, public transport hubs, employment, and residential areas) with natural assets (including river corridors, parks, and the wider countryside);
- Enhanced accessibility on foot and bike;
- Mitigation of impacts of climate change;
- Attractive habitats for wildlife;
- Stimulation of further investment;
- Increased property values; and
- Promotion of active lifestyles.

**4.24** The document notes the scales of green infrastructure available, from individual buildings, to strategic assets. The connections between these different features are of particular importance, including pedestrian pathways and rights of way, cycling routes and green links and corridors. The most relevant to this study are the neighbourhood assets (e.g. amenity green space, local parks, allotments, playing fields, cemeteries, and play areas) and strategic destinations (e.g. parks and gardens, country and regional parks and nature reserves).

<sup>4</sup> Lowland Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire Local Nature Partnership (2017) Green Infrastructure – A prospectus for lowland Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire

**4.25** The development of a strategic GI network includes the division of assets into different hierarchies: Sub-regional GI corridors; Urban GI corridors; and Urban Fringe GI enhancement zones. The Trent Strategic River Corridor forms a sub-regional corridor which runs through the urban context of Nottingham.

## Local policy

### Breathing Space: Revitalising Nottingham's Open and Green Spaces<sup>5</sup>

**4.26** Stretching from 2010 to 2020, this study provides an update to the 2007 framework of the same name, outlining the management and maintenance of green spaces in Nottingham. The overarching aim of the document is to maximise the benefits that open and green spaces provide for user groups. The strategy notes how open and green spaces, can impact economic life, create a sense of place, provide benefits to physical and mental health, encourage opportunities for learning, help reduce the perception of crime, sustain biodiversity and combat climate change.

#### Strategic vision:

*"Better quality sustainable open and green spaces that are accessible and inviting to use, resulting in more people using open and green spaces, more often"*

**4.27** The document incorporates many of the strategies which focus on improving the network of open and green spaces within Nottingham, including:

- Biodiversity Position Statement;
- Outdoor Sports Facilities Audit;
- Food Growing Framework;
- Play Management Plan;
- Play Strategy;
- Physical Activity and Sport Strategy;
- Urban Forest Strategy; and
- Climate Change Adaptation Plan.

**4.28** A Champions group was established to oversee the implementation of the strategy.

### Open and Green Space Audit

**4.29** Published in 2008, the previous green space strategy for Nottingham City was prepared in response to PPG17 which required local authorities to undertake a comprehensive audit of local need based on the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space provision. The primary purpose of the document

and appendices was to identify local space needs and to provide a greater knowledge base and understanding of the existing and future requirements both at a city wide and local level.

**4.30** The main findings of the quality, accessibility and quantity audit are detailed below:

- The average quality of Parks and Gardens, Outdoor Sports Facilities and Cemeteries, Churches and Disused Churchyards was average;
- The quality of Natural and Semi Natural space, Amenity Green Space, Provision for Children and Young People and Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms was below average;
- Local access to Parks and Gardens was generally very good, with 98% of people having access to this typology;
- Access to Amenity Green Space and Play spaces was good, with 90% and 88% of people having access to these typologies respectively;
- Gaps were apparent in the access to Natural and Semi Natural space and Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms with 66% and 65% having access to these spaces; and
- The total provision of accessible open and green space was 5.19ha per 1000 of the population, with the greatest being the availability of Parks and Gardens and Natural and Semi Natural space.

**4.31** A toolkit was also developed to ensure that the Council were able to apply a consistent approach to the measurement of impacts on open and green space due to proposed developments in the City.

### Nottingham City Council Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)<sup>6</sup>

**4.32** This document was prepared to support Core Strategic Policy 17 and Policy EN6 Biodiversity from the Local Plan Part 2, which references NERC's biodiversity duty.

#### Policy 17: Biodiversity

*This aims to: protect, restore, expand and enhance existing areas of biodiversity interest, avoid the fragmentation of the Green Infrastructure network and secure new biodiversity features in new development.*

Local Plan Part 1 – Nottingham City Aligned Core Strategy (Adopted 2014)

#### Biodiversity Duty:

<sup>5</sup> Nottingham City Council (2011) Breathing space strategy: revitalizing Nottingham's open and green spaces

<sup>6</sup> Nottingham City Council (2019) Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document Consultation Draft

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

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act since 1st October 2006

**4.33** This SPD breaks the consideration of biodiversity and ecology within the planning process into four distinct stages:

1. Assessment of the ecological impact;
2. Design to include retaining, creating and enhancing habitats and features;
3. Implementing biodiversity protection during construction (if the development has an ecological impact); and
4. Ongoing management and monitoring.

**4.34** These stages ensure that development in Nottingham avoids the loss of important biodiversity features and habitats and contributes to the ambitious biodiversity net gain goals. The SPD describes each stage in detail to safeguard biodiversity during development.

**4.35** The SPD also notes the multifunctional benefits of biodiversity, including creating healthy ecosystems, which can improve economic prosperity and social benefits including connecting residents and reducing anti-social behaviour.

#### The Provision of Open Space in New Residential and Commercial Development SPD<sup>7</sup>

**4.36** Adopted in 2019, the document provides guidance on the requirements for the provision of open space in new residential and commercial development proposals. The SPD details the implications of Policy EN2 (Open Space in New Development) and IN4 (Developer Contributions) as contained in the Local Plan Part 2, LAPP.

**4.37** The document states that open space requirements for new development should equate to the current provision of 2.4 hectares of parks and gardens per 1000 people. The requirement for open space contributions relating to student accommodation, elderly persons accommodation and new commercial development are also detailed. In addition, the document outlines the factors which determine whether open space is provided on site or whether a financial contribution should be provided towards existing provision.

#### Bee Friendly Nottingham<sup>8</sup>

**4.38** Launched in 2014, the campaign was introduced in response to increasing pressure on bees and the resulting global decrease in population. The strategy aims to ensure open and green spaces are managed for the benefit of wild and domestic bees through the provision of increased flowers for foraging and habitats for nesting.

**4.39** The campaign has included community outreach, such as the creation of information packs for schools, the promotion of pollinator friendly gardening and signposting actions with a bee-shaped sign. The strategy has also influenced wider scale strategies, such as and the action plan to reduce air pollution within the city.

#### Nottingham Playing Pitch Strategy: Strategy & Action Plan Update 2018

**4.40** The Playing Pitch Strategy provides the strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of outdoor sports pitches and facilities in Nottingham until 2028. The strategy encompasses football pitches, cricket pitches, rugby pitches (union and league), hockey / artificial grass pitches (AGPs), third generation turf pitches (3G), outdoor bowling greens, outdoor tennis courts and golf courses.

#### Vision:

*"By 2022 Nottingham will be serviced by a viable stock of Council owned/managed sites supported by a complementary network of community and private outdoor sports facilities that make outdoor sport accessible to people from the whole community"*

**4.41** The strategy divides Nottingham into three areas: North, Central and South to assess the existing provision. An overview of the findings is provided below:

- There was a shortfall in provision for football in the North, Central and South areas;
- There was a shortfall in rugby union provision in the South;
- There was a shortfall in cricket provision in the Central and South areas;
- There was no shortfall now, or expected by 2028, for rugby league, hockey, tennis, outdoor bowls, American football, lacrosse, ultimate frisbee, Gaelic sports, of golf; and
- There was currently a declining trend in demand for golf and bowling provision.

<sup>7</sup> Nottingham City Council (2019) *The Provision of Open Space in New Residential and Commercial Development*

<sup>8</sup> Nottingham City Council (no date) Bee-Friendly Nottingham [Online] Available: <https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/bees>

**4.42** The following aims and strategic recommendations were provided within the strategy:

- Aim 1: To protect the existing supply of playing pitch facilities where it is needed for meeting current or future needs;
- Aim 2: To enhance playing fields, pitches and ancillary facilities through improving quality and management of sites; and
- Aim 3: To provide new outdoors sports facilities where there is current or future demand.

### Nottingham 2028 Carbon Neutral Charter<sup>9</sup>

**4.43** Prepared by the Council on behalf of Nottingham's Green Partnership, which consists of partners from public, private, and voluntary organisations, the document outlines the City's ambitious plans to becoming a climate neutral city. This charter recognises the urgency of acting on climate change and details Nottingham's desire to be a leader in tackling climate change. However, it also acknowledges the importance of ensuring that this does not lead to a decrease in quality of life, particularly in the more deprived areas of the city.

#### Vision for sustainable Nottingham set out by the Green Partnership:

*"This carbon neutral city is growing within the limits of what society, nature and the economy can sustain. All citizens will have access to clean air and water; fresh, affordable and nutritious food, and; quality blue and green spaces. Getting around the city is sociable and enjoyable; improving mental and physical health and connecting people with nature and each other. Through being more efficient and better managing its resources, the city is increasingly self-sufficient, making it more resilient and productive. Goods are created, re-used, repaired and recycled locally, boosting local enterprise. Citizens, research and enterprise are all involved in governing the city and looking to continually improve how it operates. It is a truly global city, leading on sustainability and recognised for its wellbeing and inclusiveness."*

**4.44** The document adopts a holistic approach and identifies four key objectives, as outlined below:

- Improve air quality;
- Enhance the built environment to enable sustainable communities;
- Enable a sustainable economy; and

- Improve quality of life and human wellbeing.

**4.45** Progress in achieving the strategy will be measured in accordance with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, in particular:

- Goal 7: Clean Energy;
- Goal 9: Innovation and infrastructure;
- Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities;
- Goal 12 Responsible Consumption; and
- Goal 15: Life on Land.

### Food Growing Framework (2010-2013)

**4.46** The Food Growing Framework aims to promote food growing within the city. The strategy incorporates a number of measures aimed at supporting the delivery of this framework, including:

- **Allotments:** promoting and assisting in the community management of allotments;
- **Growing access to public land:** increasing the land used for community food growing;
- **Edible plants in public places:** ensuring green and open spaces under Council ownership and management should include fruiting and edible plants to inspire others to grow their own;
- **Schools:** creating a coordinated system to promote locally sourced food in schools;
- **Information and Support:** supporting people to grow food in their own spaces, including gardens, yards and balconies; and
- **Partnership and Research:** initiating new partnerships to research the potential of wider food growing within Nottingham.

### Urban Forest Strategy 2012 – 2020<sup>10</sup>

**4.47** This strategy outlines the framework for the planning and management of trees and the wider urban forest within Nottingham. In 2007, canopy cover within the City was 14.1% and the success of the strategy will be measured on whether canopy cover can return to this level.

#### Vision:

*"Create an urban forest that is managed sustainably for the benefit of Nottingham's communities."*

**4.48** Benefits of trees are many and diverse, including economic, social and environmental benefit. Some examples of these advantages are outlined below:

<sup>9</sup> Nottingham City Council (2018) Nottingham 2028 Carbon Neutral Charter: A sustainable approach for a carbon neutral Nottingham

<sup>10</sup> Nottingham City Council (2012) Urban Forest Strategy 2012 – 2020 and Annexes 1 to 6

- Reducing energy costs by improving the environmental performance of nearby buildings;
- Avoiding costs of infrastructure damage by mitigating flooding;
- Helping to market the city;
- Improving wellbeing and reducing mental illness;
- Reducing ultra-violet through shading;
- Creating sound barriers, or visual barriers which can reduce the perception of noise;
- Possibly reducing crime and creating stronger communities by increasing the use of community spaces;
- Intercepting rainfall and reducing stormwater flow;
- Removing pollutants from stormwater;
- Providing multiple habitats for species and increasing biodiversity;
- Creating spaces for recreation; and
- Sequestering carbon and helping to mitigate climate change.

**4.49** Within the city, trees largely fall into 4 categories: street trees, trees in parks and open spaces; trees on housing estate areas and woods. The strategy notes the importance of parks and open spaces as containing the most significant trees, which often have an important visual impact.

#### Nottingham City Council Plan 2019 – 2023<sup>11</sup>

**4.50** This document outlines the priorities for Nottingham between 2019 and 2023, with an overarching aim to ensure citizens are at the heart of everything that is done to improve the city. The vision includes 5 strands: Nottingham People; Living in Nottingham; Growing Nottingham; Respect for Nottingham; and Serving Nottingham Better. These strands were further divided into themes and specific pledges, many of which high performing, well used green spaces could help contribute to, including:

- **Health:** Reducing air pollution, helping people become physically active, and reducing childhood obesity;
- **Clean Nottingham:** Nottingham should be the cleanest big city in England, and public spaces should be managed to reduce weeds;
- **Green Nottingham:** Nottingham should be a 'Bee-Friendly City' and 10,000 trees should be planted across the city;
- **Transport:** Develop the city's cycle network;
- **Enjoying Nottingham:** Maintaining and improving play areas and expanding and protecting Green Flag winning parks and play areas;

- **Anti-social behaviour:** Bringing local people and groups together to improve their neighbourhoods; and
- **Communities:** increasing the strong sense of community cohesiveness.

#### City of Nottingham Sustainable Community Strategy 2020 – One Nottingham<sup>12</sup>

**4.51** This strategy outlines a vision to set a new direction for growth in Nottingham which will allow wealth creation to be felt across the city, breaking the poverty cycle. The strategy is based on three cross cutting aims:

- **Green:** Ensuring environmental sustainability;
- **Aspiring:** Raising aspirations; and
- **Fair:** Achieving fairness and equality of opportunity.

**4.52** These overarching aims sit within the 2020 Strategic Priorities, as outlined below:

- Develop Nottingham's international standing for science and innovation, sport and culture;
- Transform Nottingham's neighbourhood;
- Ensure that all children and young people thrive and achieve;
- Tackle poverty and deprivation by getting more local people into good jobs;
- Reduce crime, the fear of crime, substance misuse and anti-social behaviour; and
- Improve health and wellbeing.

#### Future Park Accelerator

**4.53** Nottingham is one of eight cities chosen to receive funding as part of the Future Park Accelerator (FPA), reflecting the importance of open and green space to the functioning of the city. The national initiative is funded in partnership with The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and supported by the National Trust. FPA aims to increase the accessibility and vibrancy of parks whilst maintaining their financial sustainability.

*"This is not just about new ways to fund and support these much-loved community spaces, but completely re-thinking the role green spaces play in our lives and how we can ensure they thrive for generations to come"*

Hilary McGrady, National Trust Director General, June 2019

<sup>11</sup> Nottingham City Council (2019) Council Plan 2019-2023

<sup>12</sup> Nottingham City Council (2009) City of Nottingham Sustainable Community Strategy 2020: Family, Neighbourhood, City: Raising Aspirations. One Nottingham

**4.54** In Nottingham, the FPA is focused on four key delivery areas which will examine how parks are managed and funded. These delivery areas are outlined below:

1. Community engagement;
2. Volunteering;
3. Sustainability and commercial opportunities; and
4. Funding through a charitable arm.

**4.55** These priorities will feed into the new 25-year strategy for parks and open spaces, which will ensure the long-term benefits of the funding. An important element of this work is wider consultation with the wider public. The ongoing results for this consultation are discussed further in **Chapter 6**.



## Chapter 5

# Understanding the need for parks and open space

### Population and demographic context

**5.1** The Office for National Statistics indicates that the population of the city is 305,680 (as of 2018)<sup>13</sup>. Of this, female residents make up 50.8% and male residents make up 49.2%.

**5.2** The average age of residents in Nottingham is 43.8, with over 50% of the population aged 30 or younger. This is partly explained by the two expanding universities, with 15% of the total population identifying as full-time students aged over 18. 69.6% of the population are of working age (aged 16-65), in comparison to 62.5% across Great Britain. Furthermore, 11.6% of residents are over 65 years.

**5.3** The 2011 census found that the population density for Nottingham was 41, in comparison with 4.1 in England as a whole. The geographical variation in population density in the city is indicated in **Figure 5.1**:. The highest densities are located in the city centre, including around Nottingham Trent University and University of Nottingham Jubilee Campus. These areas have a population density of 101 residents/ha or higher. The areas with lower population densities are generally to the south and east of the city. Exceptions to this include around Clifton and Aspley/Broxtowe, which have population densities of between 51 and 100 people per ha.

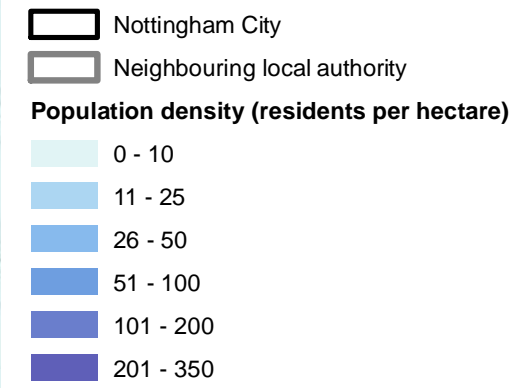
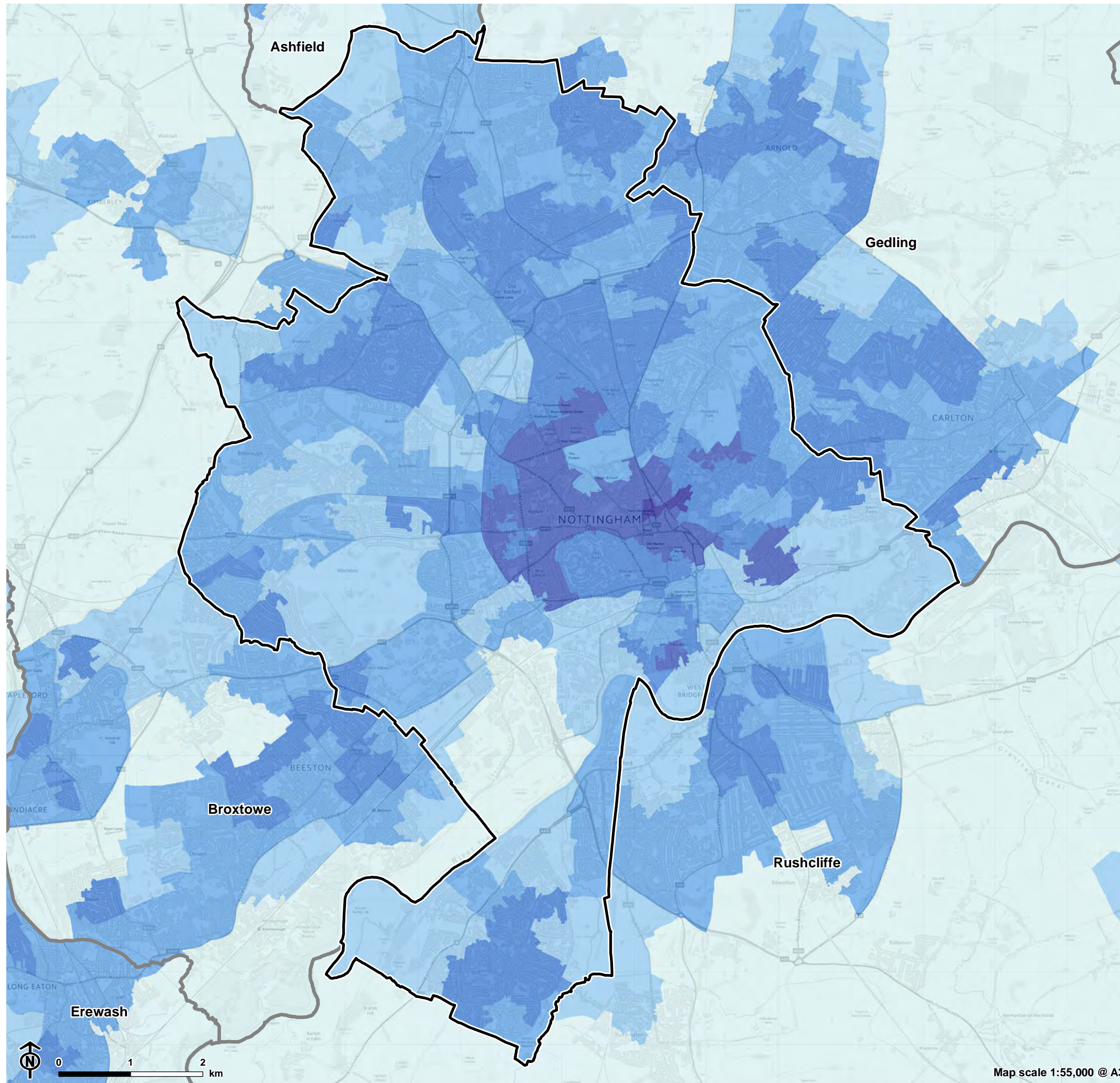
**5.4** Data available within the 2011 census identified that 16,000 people were living in communal establishments, predominantly in university halls of residence. The remainder of the population had a household density of 2.3 people per household, which is slightly lower than the English average of 2.4. This is lower primarily due to a high proportion of single person households – more than a quarter of households contain a single person of pensionable age.

**5.5** Over 40% of residents live in privately owned accommodation, however this percentage has fallen since the 2001 census. There has been a corresponding rise in people living in privately rented homes, which now accounts for 1 in 5 households in Nottingham. Despite the lower than average household density in Nottingham, 6.2% of Nottingham households have an insufficient number of bedrooms for their residents, compared to a national average of 4.8%.

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<sup>13</sup>Data provided by Nottingham City Council

Figure 5.1: Population Density



Map scale 1:55,000 @ A3

**5.6** Nottingham has a relatively diverse population. In the 2011 census, 65.4% of the population identified as White British, compared to an average of 80.5% in England and Wales. The next largest groups were Pakistani at 5.5%, 5.1% as Other White and 4% as Mixed or multiple ethnicity: White and Black Caribbean. 19.5% of the population were born outside the UK, largely from Poland and Pakistan. 85.6% of households identified English as a main language, whilst 7.8% of households had no occupants with English as a main language.<sup>14</sup>

### Nottingham's growing population

**5.7** Population modelling suggests that Nottingham's population could reach 344,300 by 2027<sup>15</sup>, which equates to an increase of 38,620 since the 2011 Census. The Government Office for Science also predicts that the city will be the 10th biggest growing conurbation in the UK, with population increasing by 94,100 between 2011 and 2037<sup>16</sup>.

**5.8** International migration and an increase in student numbers are key drivers of the population increase. As a result, it is estimated that the number of people over retirement age is not expected to increase in the short and medium term, although the number aged 85+ is expected to increase.

**5.9** The Core Strategy (adopted 2014) stated that 17,150 homes were required in Nottingham between 2011 and 2028. Three areas within the city were identified as Strategic Locations for Growth: Boots Site, Stanton Tip, Hempshill Vale; and Waterside<sup>17</sup>. These sites are also included within the Local Plan Part 2 and provide the opportunity to integrate wide ranging regeneration benefits within the city.

### Deprivation and health

**5.10** Nottingham is a prosperous city but contains pockets of significant deprivation, forming the 11th most deprived district in England. 104 of the City's LSOAs (Lower Super Output Areas) fall into the 20% most deprived and eight in the 20% least deprived. **Figure 5.2:** displays the distribution of IMD scores across the city. The data highlights that most parts of Nottingham City are more deprived than neighbouring regions. In particular Bulwell, in the north of the city, and Beechdale, Bilborough, Broxtowe in the north east are located in the most deprived 10% of LSOAs nationally. The main exception to this is around Wollaton and the University of Nottingham campus where most of the LSOAs are in the 5th decile or higher.

**5.11** The average life expectancy at birth is 81.1 for females and 77.0 for males. This is significantly lower than the national average for England of 83.1 and 79.5 respectively. The life expectancy within Nottingham is not spread evenly. In Wollaton West, Wollaton East and Lenton Abbey the life expectancy is higher than the national average and approximately 7 and 11 years higher for females and males respectively than the most deprived parts of the city.

**5.12** Furthermore, the healthy life expectancy is also significantly lower than the average for England. Males in Nottingham can expect to spend 25% of their life in poor health and have a healthy life expectancy 5.9 years less than the average. Females in Nottingham can expect to spend 32% of their life in poor health and have a healthy life expectancy 8.8 years less than the average. Wollaton West is the only area in Nottingham with a healthy life expectancy above the national average.

**5.13** The following summarises several key health statistics in Nottingham City:

- The largest contributors to the life expectancy gap between Nottingham and the England average are circulatory diseases, cancer, respiratory diseases and digestive diseases which can be influenced by lifestyle choices particularly smoking. The smoking prevalence of adults in Nottingham is significantly higher than the national average.
- Stays in hospital for both self-harm and alcohol-related harm are significantly higher in Nottingham compared to the national average.
- Infant mortality is significantly higher than the national average and whilst infant deaths are still low, they have a large impact on life expectancy due to the high number of potential years lost. In addition, data for smoking status at time of delivery, breastfeeding initiation and under 18 conceptions are all significantly worse in Nottingham compared to the national average.
- The percentage of physically active adults and excess weight in adults is not statistically different from the national average, although obesity in children (at year six) is statistically higher.

### Active Lives Survey

**5.14** Sport England Active Lives Survey examined the responses from people over 16 across England regarding their

<sup>14</sup> Nottingham City Council (2011) Nottingham Insight, Census 2011: Key and Quick Statistics

<sup>15</sup> Nottingham Insight, Population (<https://www.nottinghaminsight.org.uk/population/#:-:text=An%20overview%20of%20Nottingham's%20population,the%20UK%20and%2035%2C300%20leaving>) [Accessed 26/10/2020]

<sup>16</sup> Government Office for Science (2015) What do the latest official sub-national population projections suggest for Great Britain's 63 Cities?

<sup>17</sup> Nottingham City Council (2015) Local Plan Part 2: Land and Planning Policies Document

participation in sport and physical activity. Data was recorded annually from November 2015-2016 and most recently from the year November 2018 to November 2019.<sup>18</sup>

**5.15** The results indicated that the population of Nottingham was slightly more active compared to the England average. The results for Nov 17-18 reported 65.1% of the city's residents were Active (over 150 minutes physical activity per week), 12.7% were Fairly Active (between 30 and 149 minutes) and 24.9% were Inactive (less than 30 minutes). This compares to the England average figures of 62.6%, 12.3% and 25.1%. The data also suggested that residents in the city are more active than in other parts of Nottinghamshire. There was a nearly 5% increase in activity in Nottingham between Nov 15-16 to Nov 18-19.

**5.16** Within Nottingham there is not an equal spread of inactivity, with parts of Clifton, Broxtowe and Bulwell reporting the highest levels of inactivity (28.79 – 33.41% of the population being Inactive).

## Economic context

**5.17** According to the 2011 Census data, 61.3% of Nottingham residents aged 16-74 are economically active (in employment or actively looking for employment and able to start immediately). This is lower than the national average of 69.8%, partly due to the high proportion of university students.

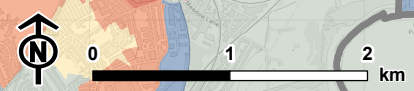
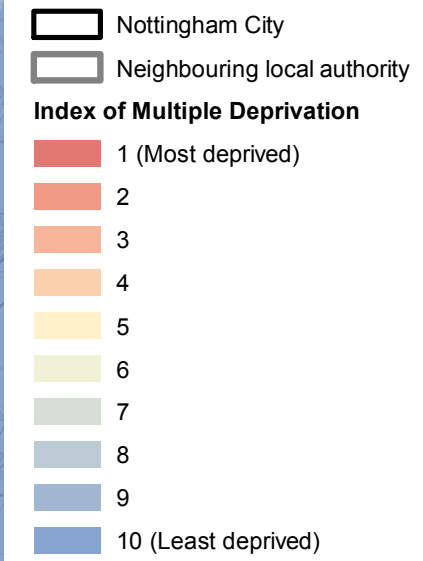
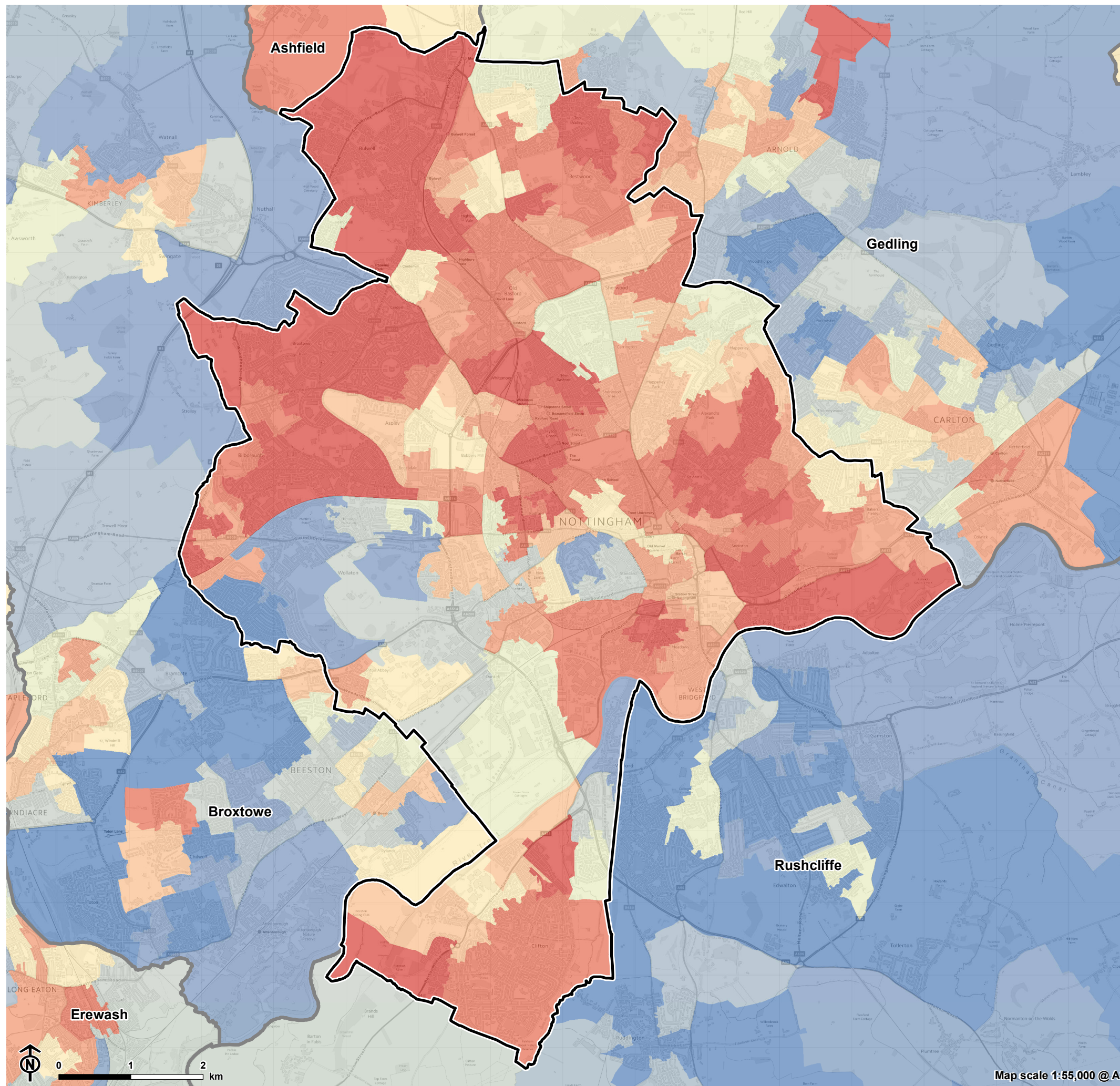
**5.18** Levels of employment within Nottingham are lower than the national average. Excluding students, employment in Nottingham in 2011 was 62.8% whereas the average for England was 68.4%. In particular, Nottingham has a lower proportion of self-employed residents. Excluding students, unemployment in Nottingham is 8.2%, the eighth highest level in England.

**5.19** 38.8% of households in Nottingham contain no working adults which is higher than the national average of 33.3%. 25% of households with dependent children had no working adults, compared to a national average of 14.

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<sup>18</sup> Active Notts (2019) Physical activity behaviour insight pack

Figure 5.2: Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)



Map scale 1:55,000 @ A3

## Chapter 6

### Summary of consultation findings

**6.1** The Council conducted an online Parks and Open Spaces survey as part of the Future Parks Accelerator programme. The consultation aimed to provide an in-depth understanding of the existing and proposed performance of parks and open spaces in the city and was available from 14 February 2020 until 31 October 2020. A snapshot of the results were downloaded on 06 October for analysis as part of this study. The survey results include reference to the lockdown restrictions associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, thus impacting on how respondents use and perceive parks and open spaces.

**6.2** There were 393 responses to the survey, which reflects approximately 0.1% of the population. The demographics of the respondents included:

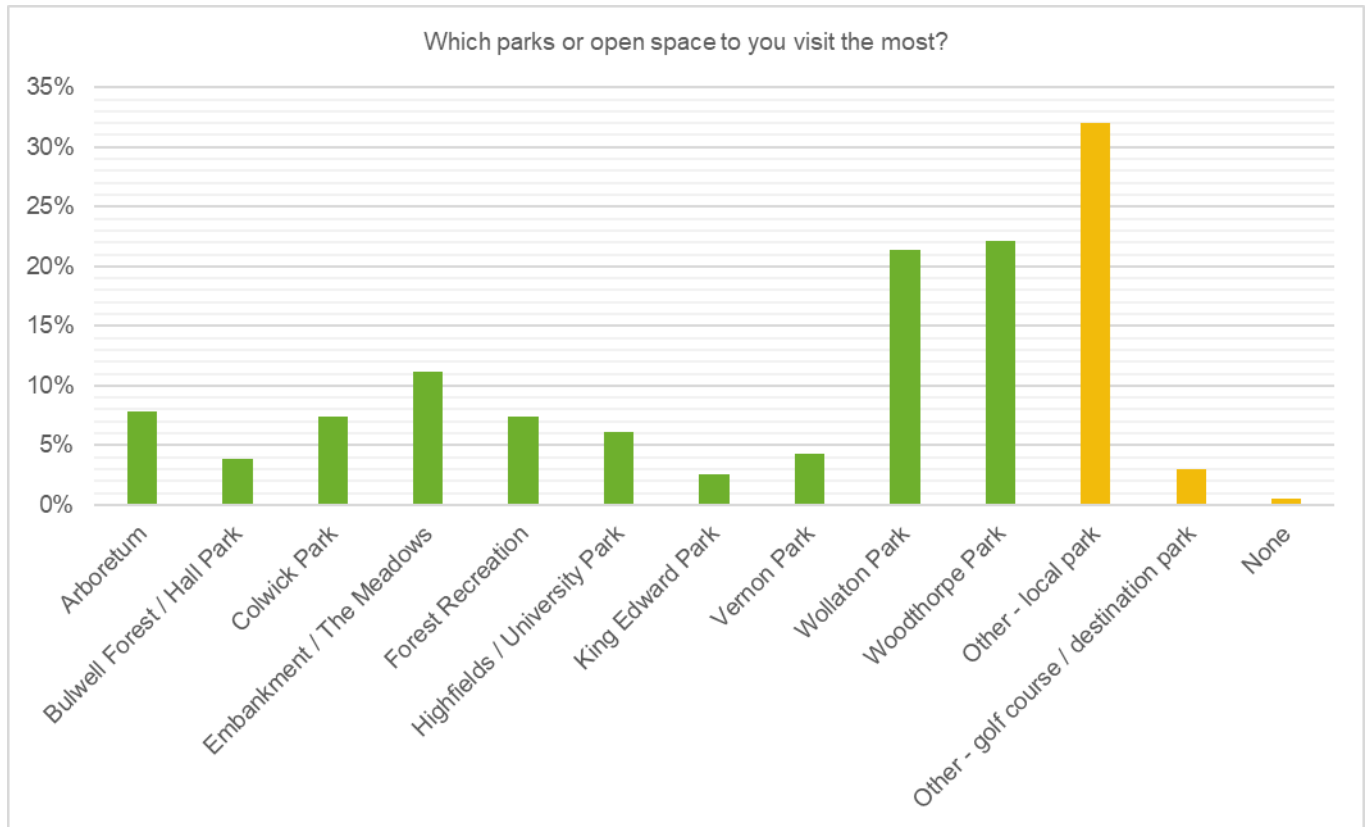
- 62% identified as female compared to 34% male, compared to an almost 50:50 split in the wider population of the Nottingham;
- 15% of respondents said they were between 16 and 34, 60% between 35 and 64, and 19% over 65, compared to 2011 census data showing 50% of the population are under 30;
- 82% of respondents identified as White – English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British, and 6% as White – Other. This compares to 64.5% and 5.1% respectively identifying this way in the 2011 Census data. In this Census, 5.5% identified as Asian – Pakistani and 4% as Mixed or multiple ethnicity – White and Black Caribbean. Within this consultation, however, only 0.5% of respondents identified as each of these ethnicities.

**6.3** Targeted consultation was limited due to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is therefore important to note that the findings of this survey may more accurately represent the needs and behaviours of older, white female residents. Future strands of consultation should aim to complement this data by reaching more diverse, younger audiences. Further consultation is due to be undertaken by Nottingham City Council throughout 2021 and 2022.

#### Which parks respondents visit

**6.4** The survey asked respondents which park they visited most often, how they usually travelled there and average journey times.

Figure 6.1: Most popular parks visited



**6.5 Figure 6.1:** indicates the parks respondents visit most often, receiving more than ten responses. It is important to note that although the question asked for the identification of one park, many participants mentioned multiple parks in their response. The total number of answers is therefore not equal to the total number of respondents.

**6.6** Parks and open spaces that were selected by less than 10 respondents have also been included in **Figure 6.1:**, categorised into local parks and larger destination spaces (including allotments, golf courses and nature reserves). The results indicate that the most popular open spaces in Nottingham are Wollaton Park and Woodthorpe Park. However, local spaces whilst seeing a lower number of visitors, are also valued spaces to individual respondents.

#### How long it takes to get to parks and open spaces

**6.7** When asked how long it took to get to their previously identified park, nearly half of respondents (49%) stated it took between 6 and 15 minutes. Over a quarter (27%) specified that it took less than 5 minutes, while less than 1% regularly visited parks over an hour from where they live. This suggests that many respondents frequently visit local parks. This is shown in **Figure 6.2:**.

Figure 6.2: Travel times to parks and open spaces

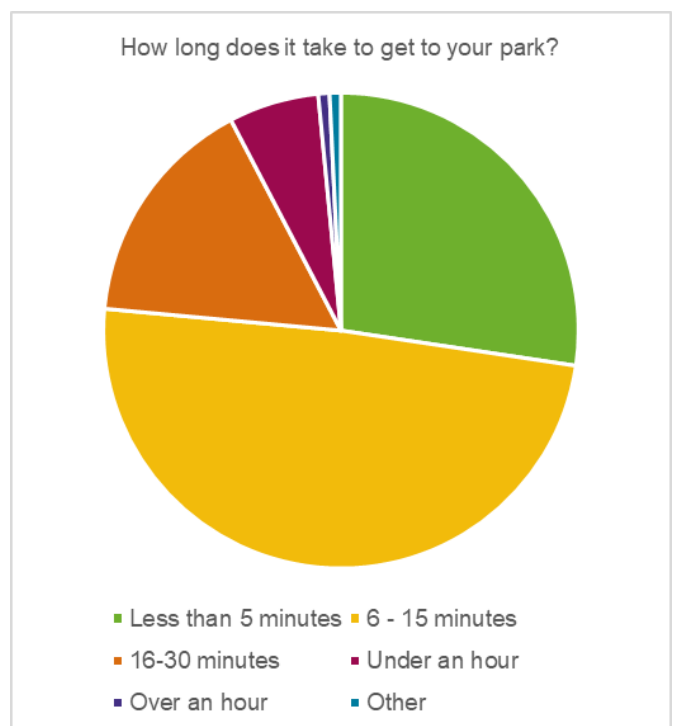
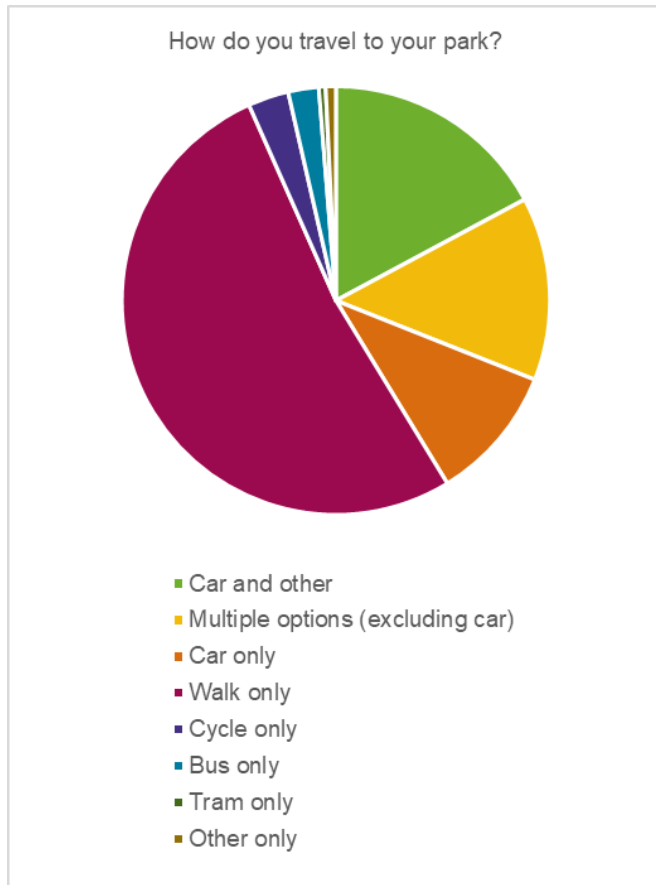


Figure 6.3: Methods of transport to get to open spaces



6.8 A few respondents selected 'other', citing the difference in time depending on how they travelled to the open space.

### How respondents travel to parks and open spaces

6.9 When respondents were asked how they travelled to the open space, the most common responses were by car (28% of respondents) and walking (78% of respondents) (see **Figure 6.3**). Where respondents checked multiple options, these were grouped as either 'car and other methods of transport' or 'multiple methods of transport excluding car'. The results indicate that over half of respondents only travelled to their park by walking.

### Reasons to visit

6.10 The survey asked participants to detail why parks and open spaces were important to them. The survey was presented with multiple-choice answers with participants asked to check up to five responses. The results are shown in **Figure 6.4** and **Figure 6.5**. Popular responses included: 'Physical exercise and sport' (67%), 'Escapism, time out & relaxation' (59%), 'Environmental benefits' (45%) and because 'They are free to use' (45%). Other reasonings included 'Walking' (50%), 'Clean and well maintained' (39%), and

'Escape, freedom, time out & relaxation' (35%). However, 'Wildlife & nature' was the most popular category (74% for why they go there and 66% as one of the best things about parks).

### Park improvements

6.11 Two questions were asked, with open text responses, to identify potential future improvements and the overall performance of the open space. These included 'what improvements, if any, would you like to see in all of Nottingham's parks and open spaces' and 'what is the one thing you would like to change in our parks and open spaces over the next 25 years?'. The results are displayed graphically in **Figure 6.6a**.

6.12 In order to assess the general trends, the responses were grouped into the following categories:

- **Nature:** including wildlife, nature, tree planting, food growing and foraging, green infrastructure and blue infrastructure;
- **Accessible visiting:** including access improvements for people with all disabilities, a reduction in the costs associated with visiting parks and requests for improved facilities;
- **Activities:** including improvements to sports provision, children's play and activities;
- **Community:** including enhancements to volunteering opportunities and the promotion of park events;
- **Funding:** including requests for increased staff resources and protection against development;
- **Environment:** including the promotion of active travel and environmentally friendly park facilities; and
- **Cleaner Parks:** including issues relating to litter and fly-tipping.



Figure 6.4: Role of parks and open spaces in Nottingham

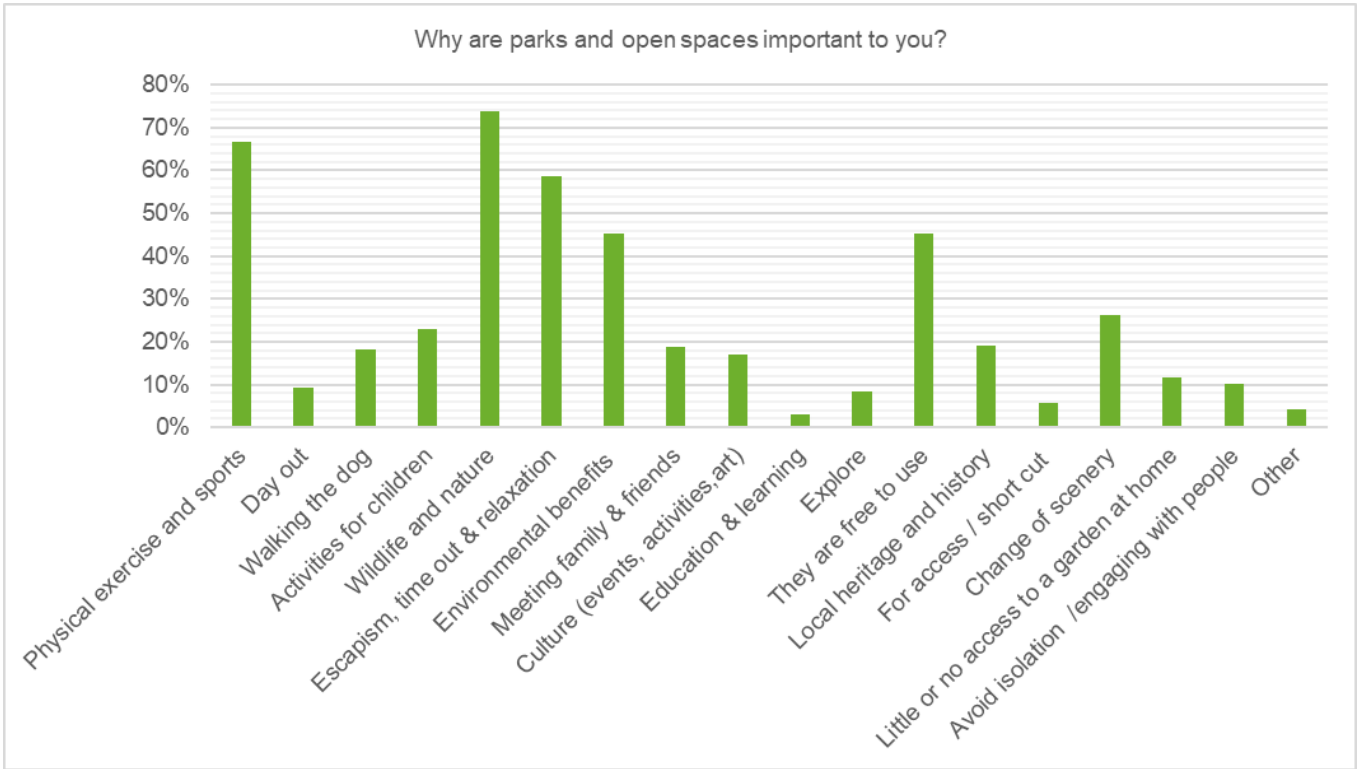


Figure 6.5: Reasons for visiting parks and open spaces in Nottingham

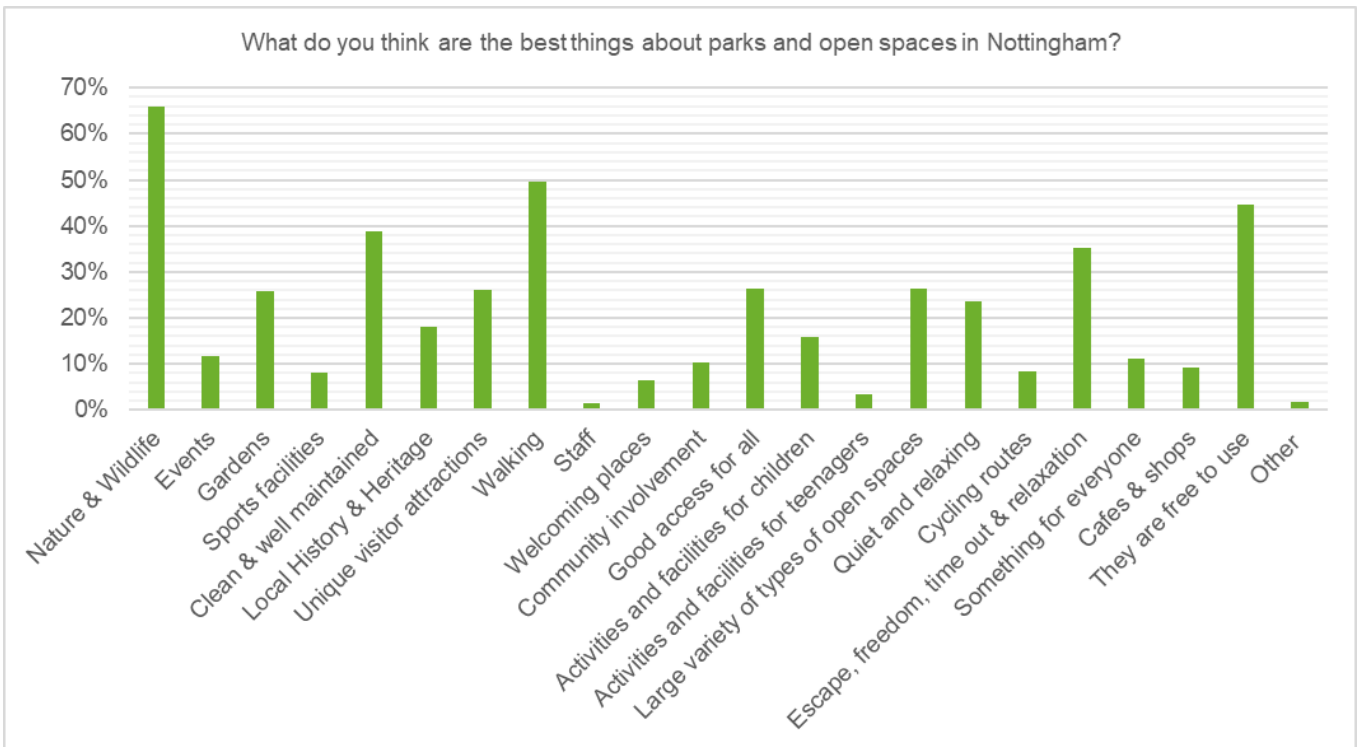


Figure 6.6a: Improvements required to parks and open spaces in Nottingham

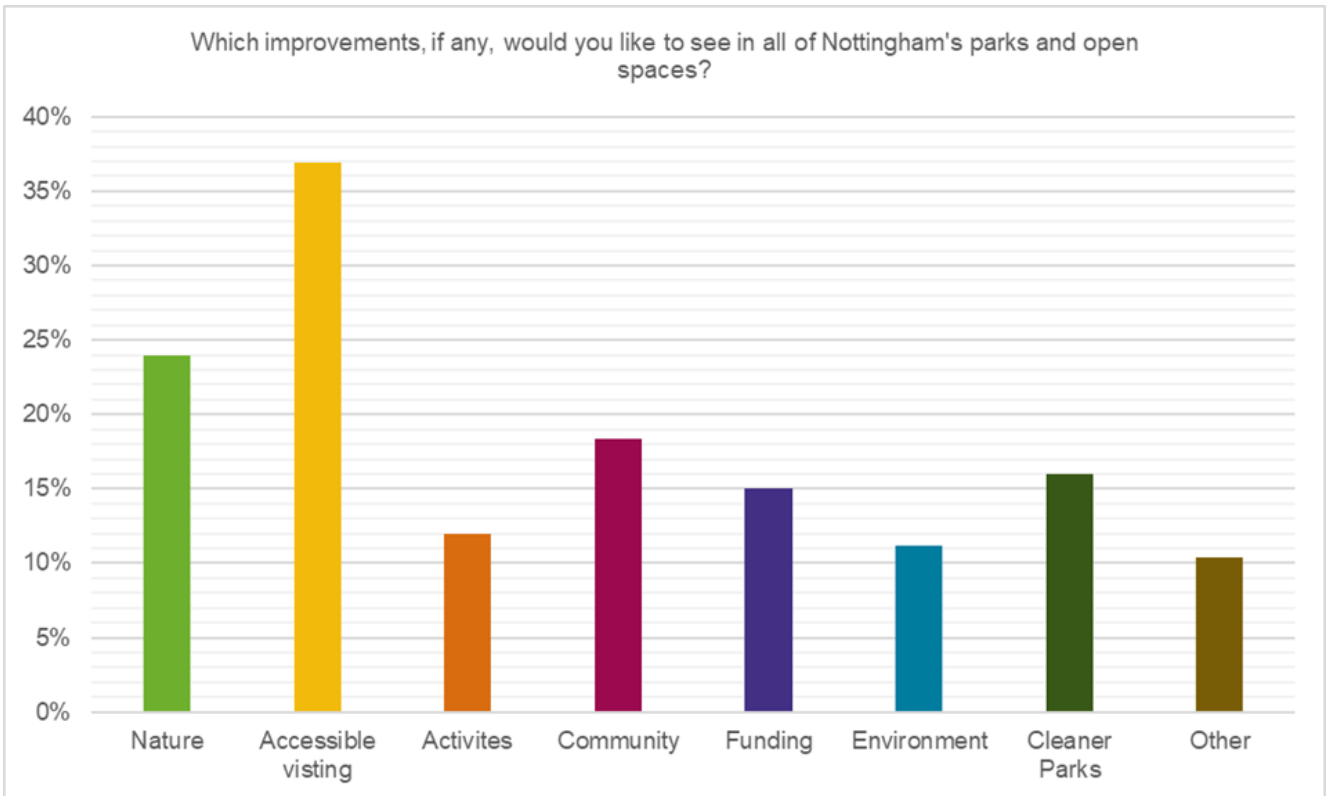
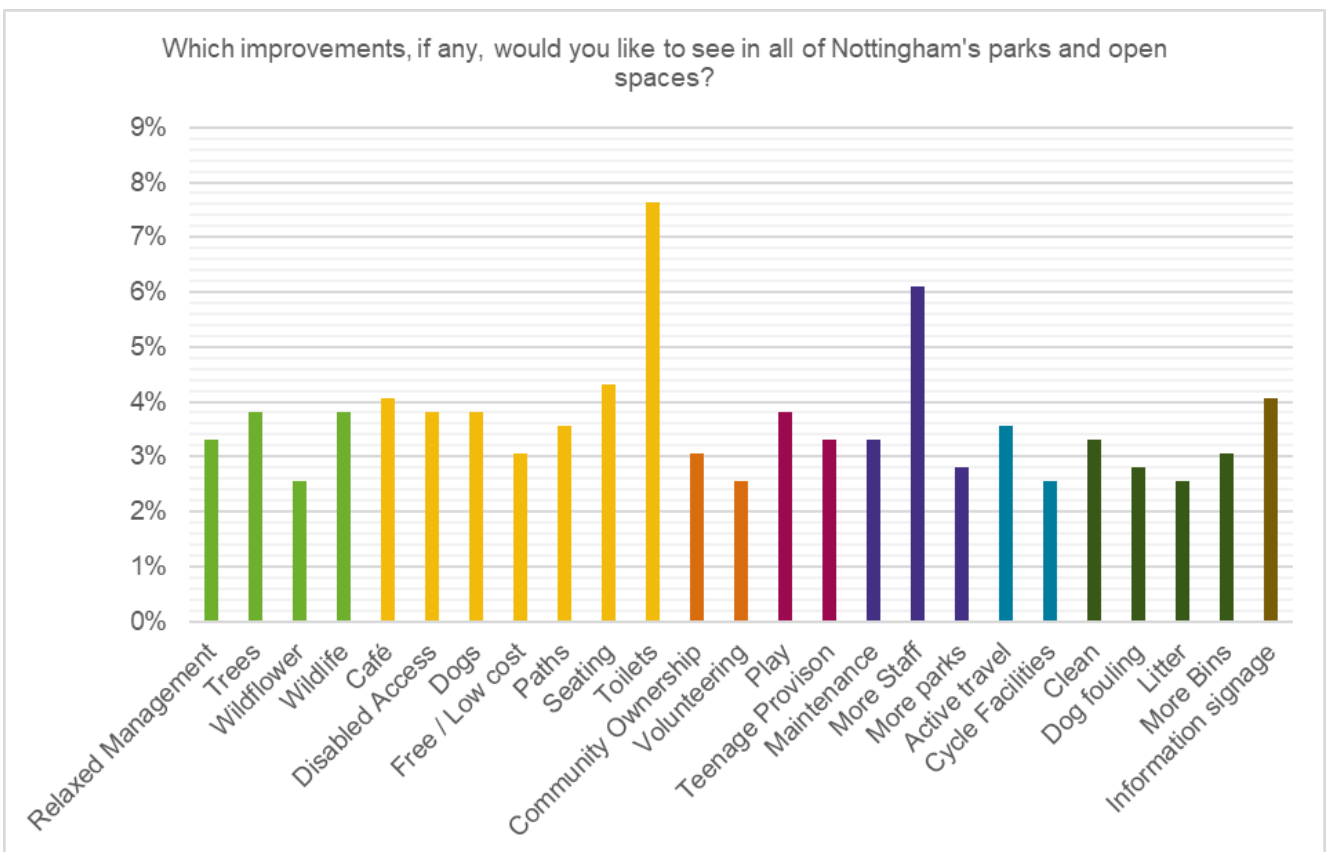


Figure 6.6b: Improvements required to parks and open spaces in Nottingham



**6.13** The themes were then categorised into specific actions, and the most popular of these (10 responses or more) are displayed in **Figure 6.6b**. Many respondents provided several ideas which were spread across different themes, in this case the response was counted in both responses. The most popular improvement related to 'accessible visiting', with over a third of responses selecting this category. This response incorporated the potential for improved toilet provision and accessibility.

*"Open/ accessible/ clean and safe toilet facilities - for older generation & families with children this can be essential for access"*

**6.14** Another important theme was 'nature', with approximately a quarter of responses falling into this theme. Participants highlighted the desire for more natural, wild areas to benefit wildlife.

**6.15** Together, the themes of 'accessible visiting' and 'nature' highlight one of the principal challenges: ensuring parks have spaces and facilities to meet all user preferences. For instance, some respondents indicated a preference for 'wildness' with less infrastructure. However, others highlighted the need for paved paths, toilets and seating to ensure enhanced accessibility.

**6.16** In addition to the provision of toilets, increased staffing within parks and open spaces was cited as a potential improvement. This was highlighted by 6% of participants.

#### 25 year park strategy

**6.17** Respondents were asked for the one improvement to Nottingham's parks and open spaces they would like to see over the next 25 years. Some participants listed more than one response within the text box, in this case only the first listed has been used in the analysis below. The results for the themes are shown in **Figure 6.7a**, with **Figure 6.7b** indicating all the ideas with more than 5 responses.

**6.18** 20% of responses fell within the 'Nature' theme, although 'funding' and 'accessible visiting' were also cited regularly (15% and 13% respectively). It is noteworthy that the percentages of respondents offering solutions associated with the themes of 'accessible visiting', 'environment' and 'cleaner parks' have more than halved. This would suggest that these changes are not as highly prioritised by respondents. Alternatively, it may be that these changes are regarded as more achievable, and therefore not necessary to mention in the context of 25 years.

**6.19** The most popular single improvement related to park provision, which was identified by over 5% of participants. In addition, 5% of responses related to ensuring the long term protection of open space, ensuring they remain freely accessible and undeveloped. This suggests that there is a

nervousness regarding long-term park and open space provision. Within the 'accessible visiting' category, other popular suggestions included improved toilet provision, seating upgrades and enhanced access for people with disabilities.

**6.20** Although not one of the most popular improvements, it is important to note that there were a number of responses that mentioned skateboarding throughout, suggesting that for some respondents this is the sole reason for visiting parks.

*"More friendly to diverse exercise/activities such as skateboarding"*

**6.21** The issue of car parking provided contrasting responses. A number of participants stated that the rising costs of car parking were deterring visitors. Additionally, a number of respondents suggests that small car parks were leading to congestion on nearby local roads. In contrast, some participants mentioned the environmental benefit of reducing the dependency on car travel and suggested that they would like car parks to be more expensive or re-purposed.

*"The tensions between some groups of users to be addressed by better education on both sides, e.g. parents and dog walkers. Parks are essential for both ..."*

**6.22** Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the seven priorities listed below:

- **Quality:** Providing good quality parks and open spaces;
- **Equal access:** Providing a variety of activities that enables and encourages everyone to use our parks and open spaces;
- **Climate change:** Increasing wildlife meadows, food growing opportunities etc. in order to help tackle climate change issues;
- **Health and wellbeing:** more activities that help promote healthy and active lifestyles;
- **Sustainability and commercial opportunities:** Ensuring parks and open spaces can secure income for the long term continued maintenance and improvements;
- **Community engagement and empowerment:** Encouraging residents to be involved in how their parks are managed and developed;
- **Volunteering:** An improved volunteering scheme with a wide range of volunteer opportunities and better support for volunteers of parks and open spaces.

Figure 6.7a: One change to parks and open spaces in the next 25 years

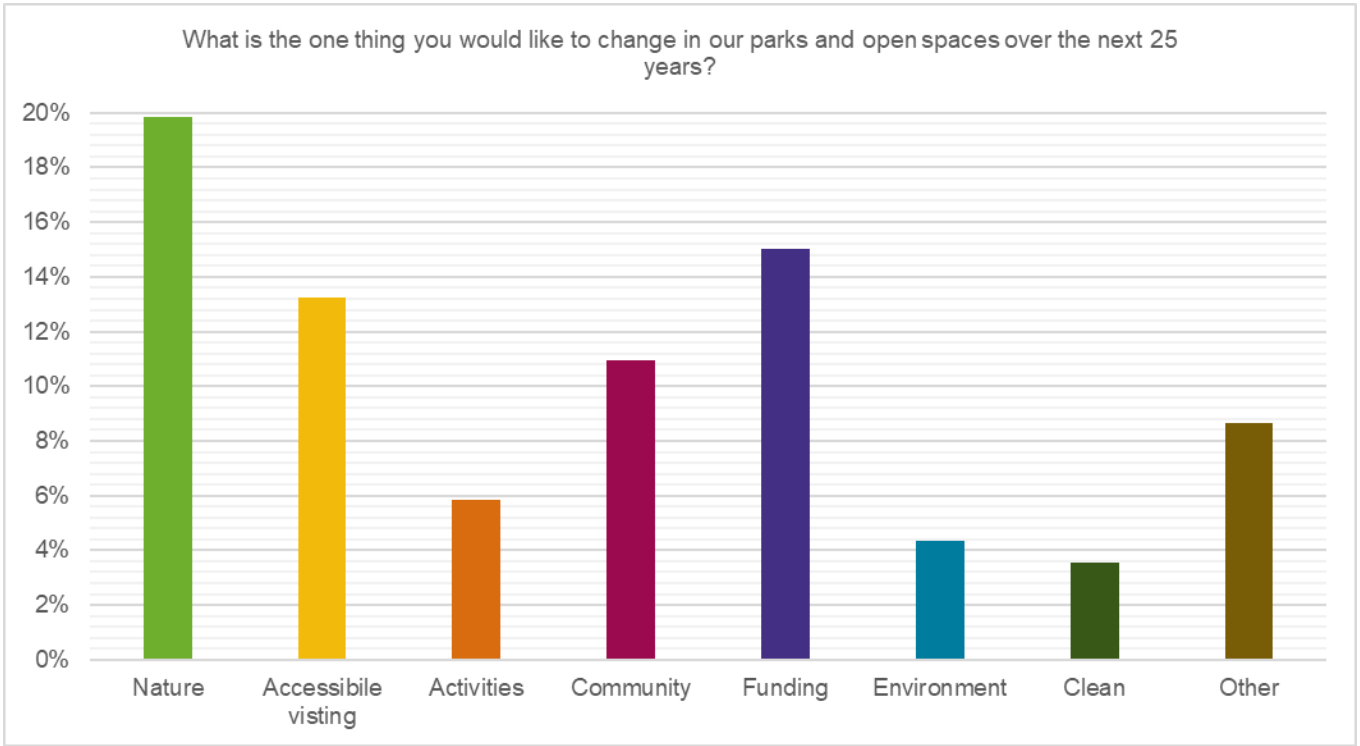


Figure 6.7b: One change to parks and open spaces in the next 25 years

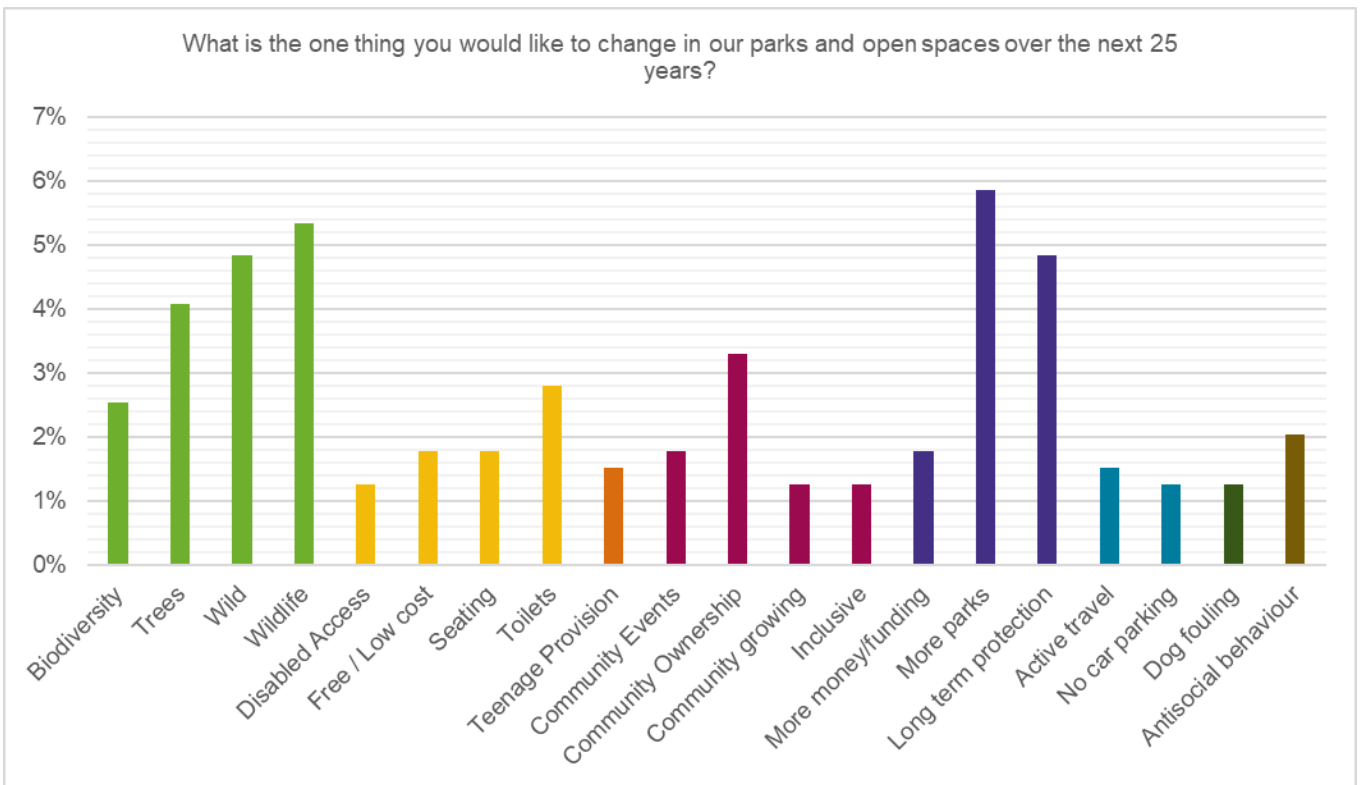
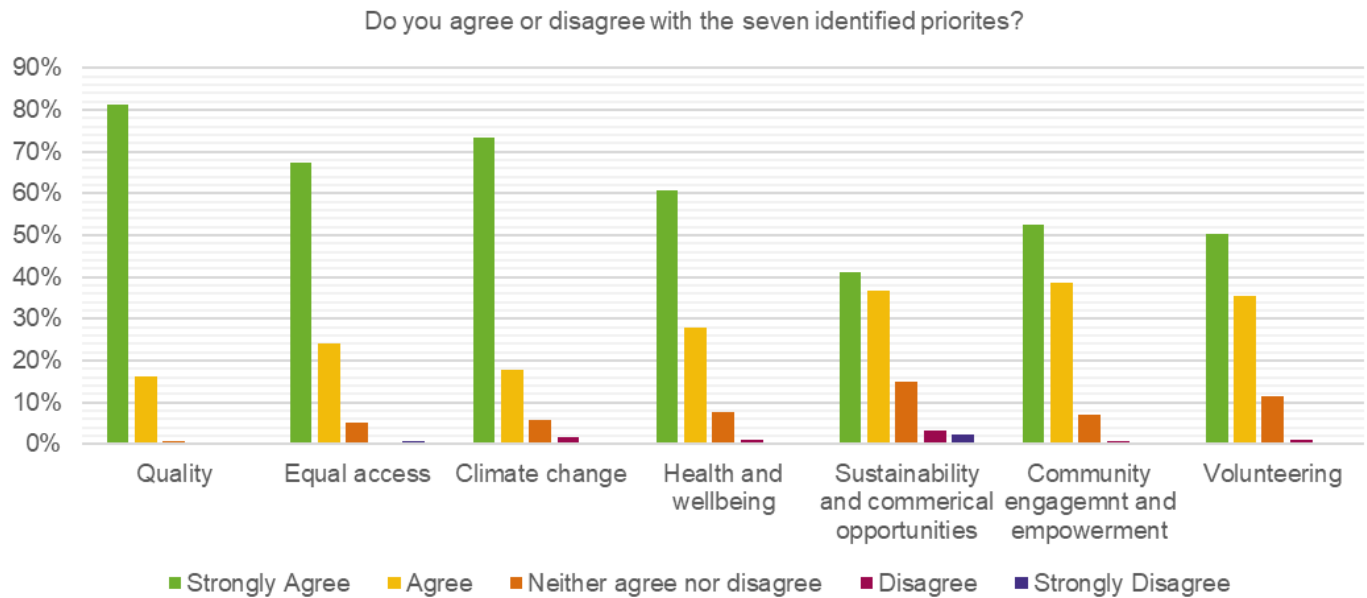


Figure 6.8: Seven priorities for parks and open spaces



**6.23 Figure 6.8:** indicates that there is overall agreement with the priorities, with over 75% of participants selecting 'agree' or 'strongly agree'. In general, the results show a similar pattern to the previous questions relating to park improvements and future change. For instance, there appears to be a higher level of support for the 'climate change' priority which includes spaces for wildlife, compared to the 'community engagement' theme. It is noted that whilst securing funding was seen as a priority in order to facilitate increased staffing resource, there is less support for the 'sustainability and commercial opportunities' priority.

### Climate change

**6.24** The survey contained two questions specifically relating to climate change. The first asked whether respondents were concerned about climate change (five choices from 'very concerned' to 'not concerned at all') and second was an open text response asking if participants knew how parks could help with climate change.

**6.25** Overall, there was a high level of concern regarding climate change across the respondents. Less than 2% of participants said they were either 'not concerned' or 'not concerned at all' about climate change, compared to 60% who said they were 'very concerned' and 30% who said they were 'concerned'.

**6.26** The responses identifying how parks and open spaces could help prevent or reduce the effects of climate change were divided into separate themes to aid analysis. Where respondents provided multiple suggestions, the response has

been counted in all relevant themes. The theme categories are listed below:

- Wildlife / rewilding;
- Ecosystem services (including tree planting);
- Active Travel;
- Education and inspiration; and
- Recycling and sustainability.

**6.27 Figure 6.9a** indicates the breakdown of results according to these themes.

Figure 6.9a: Ideas for parks and open spaces to prevent or reduce the effects of climate change

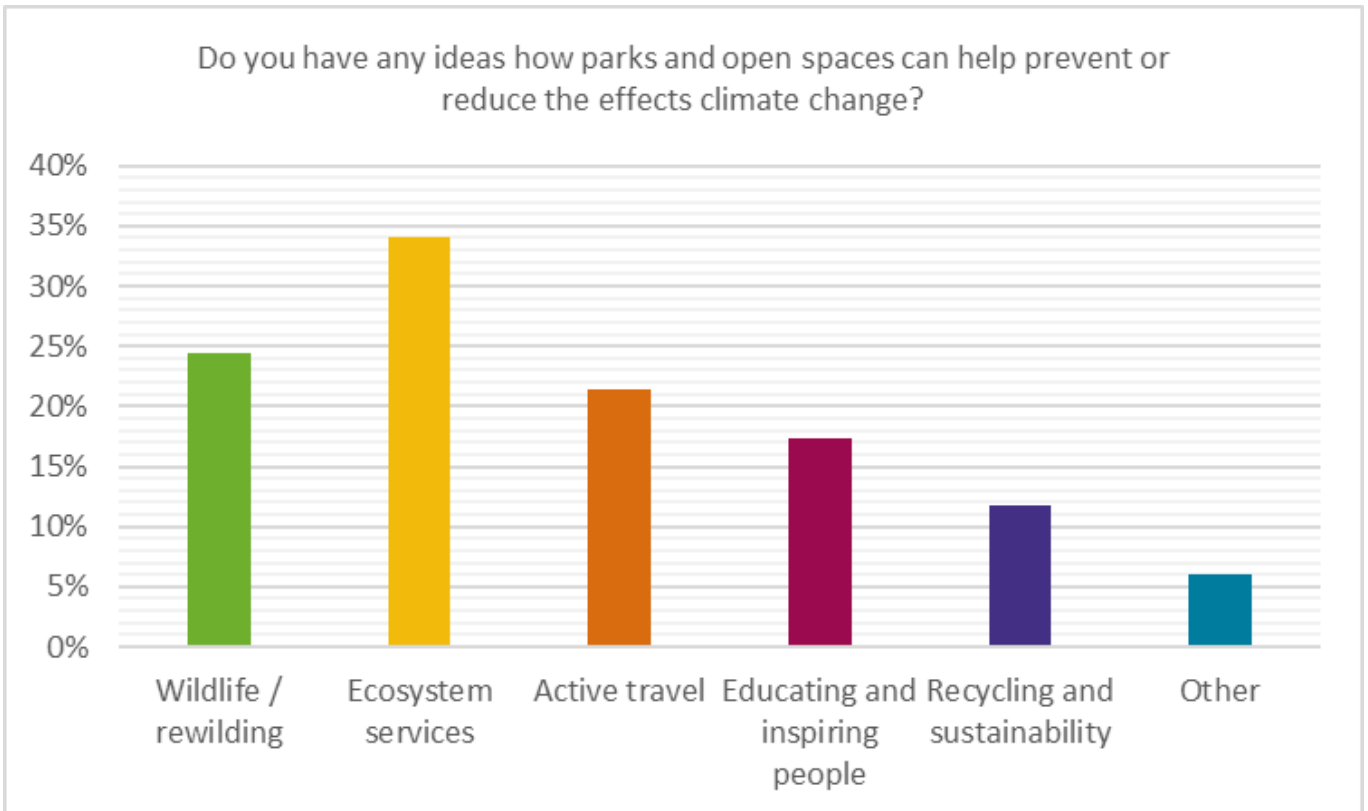
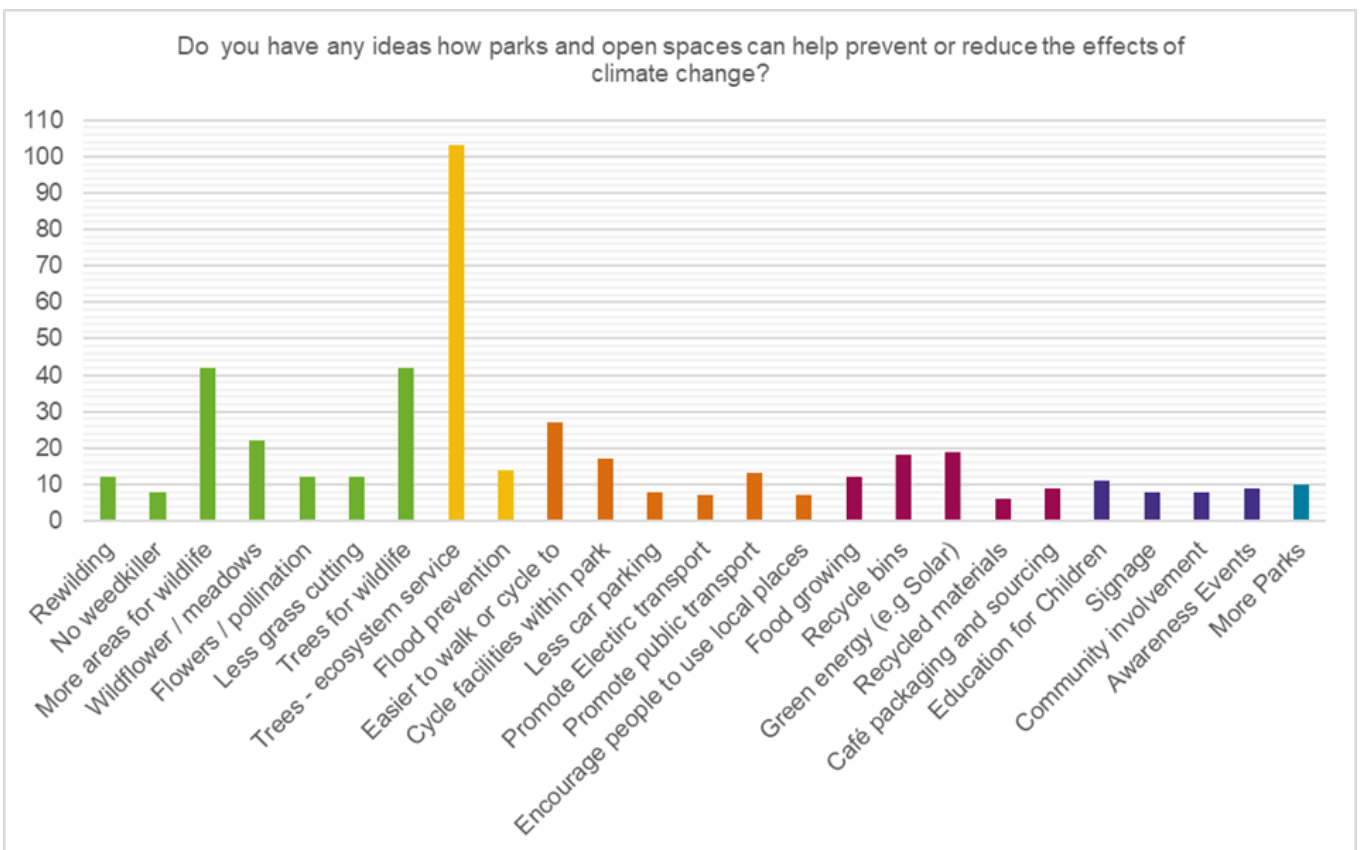


Figure 6.9b: Ideas for parks and open spaces to prevent or reduce the effects of climate change



**6.28** The most popular theme was 'ecosystem services', including the suggestion to plant more trees. This was followed by the 'wildlife / rewilding' category, highlighting the important link in the public's perception between climate change and nature conservation.

**6.29** The themes were sub-divided to focus on the most common suggestions for improvements, as shown in **Figure 6.9b**. One third of respondents suggested increased tree planting in their response. Within the 'active travel' category, there was also support for improvements to active travel, rather than increasing costs for car usage. The most popular specific action within this group related to the provision of cycle parking. Within the 'recycling and sustainability' theme, the most popular suggestion focussed on green energy and the installation of recycling bins in parks

### Volunteering

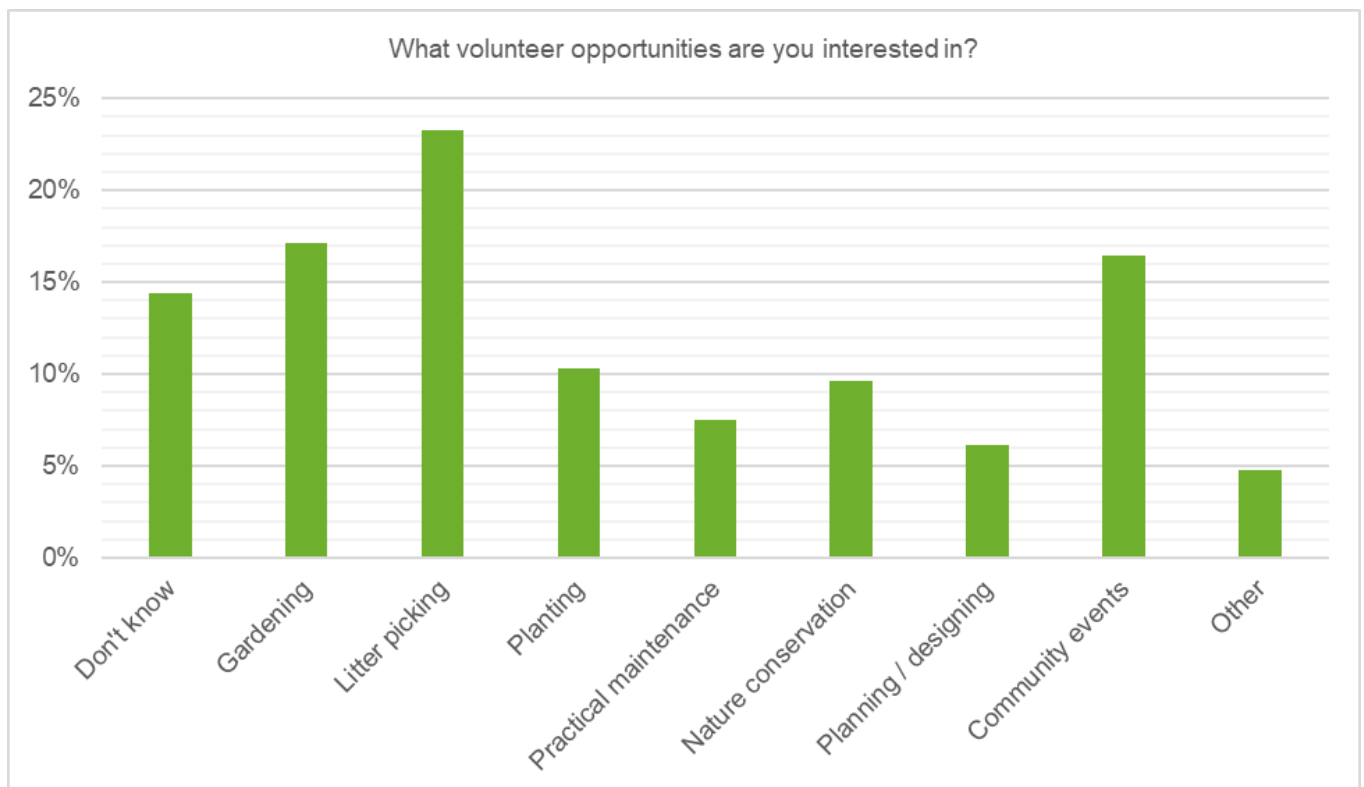
**6.30** Over 25% of respondents currently volunteer in their parks and open spaces. However, of the 75% of respondents who do not currently volunteer, over half said would be interested in volunteering. These results can be seen in **Figure 6.10**.

**6.31** For those who do volunteer, approximately a third of participants volunteered less than once a month. This suggests that ad hoc volunteering opportunities are as important as regular sessions. Respondents who do not currently volunteer but would be interested in doing so were asked about their specific interests (see **Figure 6.11**). Responses varied in content reflecting availability, an interest in specific tasks and barriers to future involvement.

**Figure 6.10: Interest in volunteering**



**Figure 6.11: Volunteer opportunities**



**6.32** The most popular tasks included litter picking (23%) and gardening (17%). In addition, 16% of participants were interested in helping at community events, including education and engagement. However, 10% of respondents suggested that time constraints made it difficult to commit to regular volunteering or that they could only participate at weekends or in evenings.

**6.33** Other barriers to note included difficulty with mobility (3% of respondents) and a lack of diversity within groups (1%). Although these were not reported by many participants, they are important factors to consider, especially as the demographic of respondents does not reflect the population in Nottingham.

*"For me to be involved there would have to be a greater degree of cultural diversity of volunteers in any friends group."*

### Conclusion

**6.34** The results indicate that there is a wide variety of reasons respondents visit parks and open spaces. Many participants reported travelling short distances, often walking to get there, suggesting that local parks are highly valued by the communities within Nottingham. There was also support in particular for the introduction of natural spaces and wildlife friendly planting into parks. However, there were several themes where respondents displayed contrasting views on the factors influencing the future performance of Nottingham's parks and open spaces. These included the scale of future events in parks as well as the requirement for car parking provision. It is important therefore that any future changes are communicated and promoted appropriately to ensure community 'buy-in'.



## Chapter 7

### Quantity assessment

**7.1** It is critical that an assessment of open space is underpinned by accurate spatial data. It was therefore essential that the baseline data held by the Council was verified and updated to reflect the current provision.

#### Updating the baseline

**7.2** A comprehensive GIS dataset was provided by the Council. The data contained all site names, primary typology, secondary typology and other details.

#### Verifying and updating site boundaries

**7.3** In order to ensure all open spaces were captured, the following data sources were used to review the baseline open space dataset:

- Ordnance Survey Greenspace;
- Ordnance Survey MasterMap;
- Open Street Map Points of Interest;
- Natural England Country Parks;
- Aerial photography (Bing, Google, ESRI);
- Internet searches for information on particular sites; and
- Council officer knowledge.

**7.4** In addition, the following features were reviewed:

- Boundaries; and
- Existing primary and secondary typologies.

**7.5** All additional open spaces identified, changes to open space boundaries and changes to open space typologies were individually agreed with and approved by the Council before being added to the GIS data.

#### Further work on site boundaries

**7.6** A number of 'sliver' gaps and overlaps were identified in the GIS data. As agreed with the Council, these gaps and overlaps remain in the data used for this study. Updates to the 'master' copy of the open space data will be made by the Council at a later date. It is not considered that these gaps and overlaps will have any significant impact on measurements shown in this report.

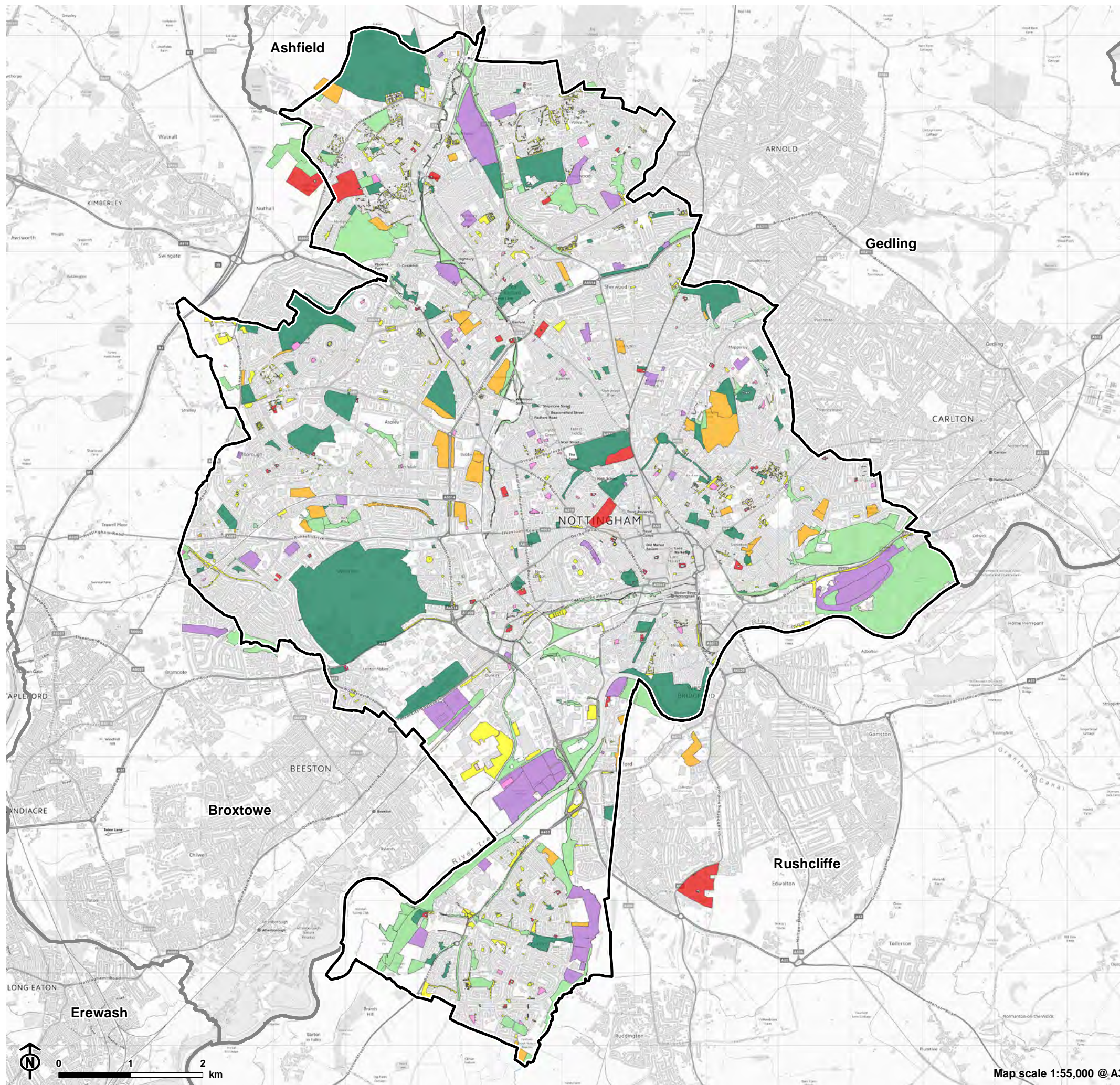
### Categorisation of sites by typology

7.7 Each site has been assigned a primary typology based on key characteristics and functionality, as set out in **Table 7.1**. The typology for each site was reviewed during an initial desk study and amended following site visits as appropriate (and in agreement with the Council).

**Table 7.1: Open space typology descriptions**

Open space typology	Primary purpose
Parks and Gardens	Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events. More multi-functional than other open space, offering space for quiet relaxation as well as a range of amenities and activities for visitors. Parks often include children's play, youth and/or outdoor sports facilities.
Natural and Semi Natural	Access to nature, wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education awareness.
Amenity Green Space	Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work. Amenity Green Spaces provide a less formal green space experience than park and gardens, with generally fewer facilities and habitats.
Cemeteries, Churches and Disused Churchyards	Quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.
Provision for Children and Young People	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters.
Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms	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.
Outdoor Sports Facility	Participation in outdoor sports, such as pitch sports, tennis, bowls, athletics, or countryside and water sports.

Figure 7.1: Open Space by Primary Typology



- Nottingham City
- Neighbouring local authority
- Open space primary typology**
  - Parks and gardens
  - Natural and semi natural
  - Amenity green space
  - Allotments, community gardens and urban farms
  - Cemeteries, churches and disused churchyards
  - Provision for children and young people
  - Outdoor sports facility



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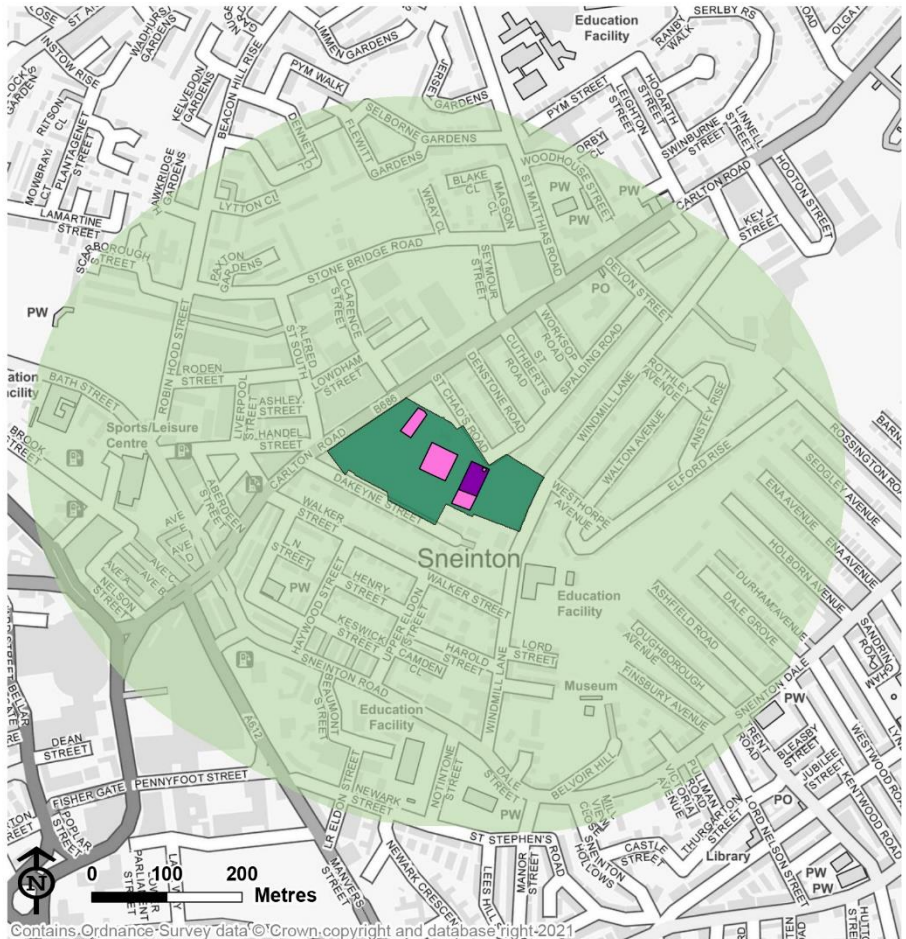
**Approach to mapping multi-functional sites**

**7.2** Due to the multi-functional nature of the open spaces in Nottingham, some facilities (e.g. play spaces and sports pitches) are often located within other types of green space, such as Natural and Semi Natural space. In order to ensure that sites falling within wider spaces are taken into account in the analysis, these sites were given a 'secondary' typology. When calculating total quantities of provision of, for example, a Natural and Semi Natural space, the area of play space or sports pitches within them has been excluded so that only the open space functioning as an informal open space offering

access to nature was assessed. This ensured no double counting of quantities across typologies e.g. assuming that an area of Natural and Semi Natural space is considered when considering the quantity of provision for children and young people. However, when applying accessibility catchments, it is considered that it is the 'total site' that defines the catchment. For example, a football pitch and playground within a park are likely to enhance its popularity. Therefore, when accessibility catchments have been applied the total area has been used to calculate the appropriate buffer. This approach is shown in **Figure 7.2:**

**Figure 7.2: Approach to mapping functional sites**

- Open space primary typology**
- Parks and Gardens
- Open space secondary typology**
- Outdoor Sports Facility
- Provision for Children and Young People
- Local park and garden 400m access buffer



## Developing a hierarchy

**7.3** In order to develop a framework for analysis of the sites and to set appropriate standards, the open space hierarchy from the Nottingham Open and Green Space Audit 2008 was applied. The hierarchy recognises that open spaces of different hierarchy would be expected to provide a different 'offer' to users. For instance, users will be more likely to travel

further to reach a site with more facilities than a small area of Amenity Green Space with no facilities. The hierarchy is shown in **Table 7.2:**

**7.4** A hierarchy has also been developed for equipped play facilities, which is primarily based on the age ranges catered for, as shown in **Table 7.3:**

**Table 7.2: Developing an open space hierarchy**

Typology	Destination provision	City provision	Neighbourhood provision	Local provision
<b>Parks and Gardens</b>				
Description	These spaces should attract visitors from across the city and the wider county, offering a range of attractions and facilities.	City parks and gardens should include facilities offering inclusive and accessible activities, both formal and informal. These should attract families, individuals, school groups, the voluntary sector and sporting organisations from across the city.	These spaces should be focal points within communities, offering predominantly informal recreational opportunities. This should include events and activities involving residents, community groups and school / youth groups.	These spaces would primarily include provision for informal recreation. Facilities are limited but may include provision for children and young children.
<b>Natural and Semi Natural</b>				
Description	These spaces should include attractions to encourage visitors from across the city and the wider county to experience nature and biodiversity. Visitor facilities should be zoned to offer space for wildlife in addition to visitors.	These spaces should include features of wildlife and biodiversity importance, offering benefits including enhanced physical, mental and social wellbeing. These facilities should attract families, individuals, school groups, the voluntary sector and sporting organisations from across the city.	These spaces should be natural areas, greater than 1ha in size, providing basic facilities for the local community for experiencing biodiversity and informal recreation. Sites should be accessible without the need to cross major roads.	Local natural and semi-natural spaces would be less than 1ha, including natural habitats that are managed for biodiversity.
<b>Amenity Green Space</b>				
Size provision (area ha)	N/A The division of Amenity Green Space into a hierarchy was not deemed appropriate for the purposes of this assessment. This is predominantly local provision and the majority of sites within Nottingham are relatively small in size.			
<b>Cemeteries, Churches and Disused Churchyards</b>				
Size provision (area ha)	N/A Further division of Cemeteries, Churches and Disused Churchyards was not deemed appropriate.			
<b>Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms</b>				
Size provision (area ha)	N/A Further division of Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms into a hierarchy was not deemed appropriate for the purposes of this assessment as this type of open space performs the same function and 'offer' regardless of size.			

**Table 7.3: Criteria for play hierarchy**

Criteria	Destination Playable Space	City Playable Space	Neighbourhood Playable Space	Local Playable Space
Description of high quality/value play space	A landscaped space which caters for all age ranges (under 5s, 5-11 and 11 and above). The site contains toilets,	A landscaped space which caters for all age ranges (under 5s, 5-11 and 11 and above). Refreshment facilities	A landscaped space which caters for two of the three age range bandings. Refreshment facilities and parking spaces are not present.	A varied natural space which caters for only one age range banding (primarily under 5s).

Criteria	Destination Playable Space	City Playable Space	Neighbourhood Playable Space	Local Playable Space
	parking spaces and / or refreshment facilities.	and parking spaces are not present.		
Guideline size	No minimum or maximum size	No minimum or maximum size	No minimum or maximum size	No minimum or maximum size

## Current Provision

7.5 Following the assignment of a primary typology and hierarchy to each of the sites, **Table 7.4:** summarises the quantity of provision by typology and hierarchy within Nottingham City. This includes all sites, whether the sites were audited or not.

Table 7.4: Open space by primary typology and hierarchy

Primary typology	Hierarchy	Count	Area (ha) in Nottingham	Example
Parks and Gardens	Destination	6	281.52	Wollaton Park
Parks and Gardens	City	9	232.01	Broxtowe Country Park
Parks and Gardens	Neighbourhood	36	114.91	Heathfield Park
Parks and Gardens	Local	54	21.54	Angell Green Park
<b>Parks and Gardens</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>649.98</b>	
Natural and Semi Natural	City	104	298.47	Colwick Woods LNR
Natural and Semi Natural	Neighbourhood	33	127.24	Glapton Wood
Natural and Semi Natural	Local	101	66.84	Snape Wood
<b>Natural and Semi Natural</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>492.56</b>	
Amenity Green Space		1446	125.12	Torvill Drive Open Space
Cemeteries, Churches and Disused Churchyards		55	15.90	St Wilfred's Church
Provision for Children and Young People		52	40.84	Britten Gardens Play Area
Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms		51	124.27	Bar Lane Allotments
<b>Nottingham City total</b>		<b>1947</b>	<b>1448.68</b>	

7.6 The data also includes additional secondary typologies of Provision for Children and Young People and Outdoor Sports Facilities found within other primary typologies.

7.7 For the purposes of this assessment, sites categorised as 'accessible' are those that fall under the following access categories:

- Freely accessible to public;

- Freely accessible to public: opening hours; and
- Freely accessible to public: unofficial/de facto.

De facto definition: Unofficial access to a site that is intended to be not publicly accessible, e.g. evidence of access through a gap in a fence.

**7.8 Table 7.5:** shows the quantity of open space assessed for this study and its accessibility.

**Table 7.5: Open space categorised by activity**

Primary typology	Freely accessible to public (Area ha)	Freely accessible to public: opening hours (Area ha)	Freely accessible to public: unofficial/de fact (Area ha)	Restricted access: members/tenants only (Area ha)	Restricted access: other (Area ha)	No public access	No access information*
Parks and Gardens	401.76	237.02	0.69	0.00	0.31	10.20	0.00
Natural and Semi Natural	418.38	0.00	2.32	0.00	0.00	71.86	0.00
Amenity Green Space	5.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.44	119.66
Cemeteries, Churches and Disused Churchyards	11.46	26.89	0.50	0.00	0.95	1.01	0.03
Provision for Children and Young People	9.62	0.27	0.00	0.00	0.45	5.57	0.00
Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms	0.00	31.26	0.00	71.33	1.94	19.74	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>846.24</b>	<b>295.44</b>	<b>3.52</b>	<b>71.33</b>	<b>3.64</b>	<b>108.81</b>	<b>119.69</b>

\*Not all open spaces were audited, see paragraphs 3.12 and 3.13 for more information about open spaces selected for audit

**7.9** Using the approach outlined in paragraph 7.8, a number of secondary typologies were identified within larger sites. As can be seen in **Table 7.6:** when all secondary typologies are removed from the primary typologies and placed alongside their equivalent primary typology, the total area of Parks and Gardens reduces. This is because many of these sites have Outdoor Sports Facilities or Provision for Children and Young People as a secondary typology. Similarly, the total area of Provision for Children and Young People increases, as more sites of this type have been identified as a secondary typology than as primary typology.

**Table 7.6: Area of accessible open space by typology when secondary typologies are combined with their equivalent primary typology**

Primary and secondary typologies	Area (ha)
Parks and Gardens	533.55
Natural and Semi Natural	425.57
Amenity Green Space	9.75
Cemeteries, Churches and Disused Churchyards	38.86
Provision for Children and Young People	14.52
Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms	31.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>1053.50</b>

## Play provision

**7.10** When both primary and secondary typologies are considered, the total number of sites categorised as Provision for Children and Young People equates to 251. 141 of these sites are categorised as equipped play, 96 are 'other play' such as MUGAs or green gyms, whilst the remaining 14 were not audited due to lack of access (see **Appendix C**).

**7.11** 48 of the sites described above have a primary typology of Provision for Children and Young People, whilst the rest fall within other typologies (refer to **Table 7.7:** and **Table 7.8:**).

**Table 7.7: Number of play areas by primary typology**

Primary typology	Number of play areas
Parks and Gardens	79
Natural and Semi Natural	5
Amenity Green Space	6
Provision for Children and Young People	48
Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>139</b>

**Table 7.8: Number of other play areas by primary typology**

Primary typology	Number of play areas
Parks and Gardens	75
Provision for Children and Young People	18
Outdoor Sports Facility	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>

**7.12** Play areas were found to cater for children of all ages and offer a wide range of activities. Of the audited play areas, 83% of sites with play cater for under 5s; 90% cater for ages 5-11; and 35% cater for 11+. In addition, 96% of the play areas provide space for informal play/ general runabout/natural play.

**7.13** Sites with 'other play' provide a range of activities such as green gyms, MUGAs and wheels parks; some of which are suitable for a wide range of users.

**7.14** Each audited site with play has been assigned to a playable space hierarchy based upon the age groups catered for. Other play has been categorised separately, even if it is co-located with play provision. This is due to the fact that some sites are not solely for use by children. The play space

hierarchy is described in **Table 7.3:**. Based upon the play hierarchy; the following playable spaces were recorded (excluding sites which were not audited):

- 4 Destination playable spaces;
- 23 City playable spaces; and
- 99 Neighbourhood playable spaces; and
- 15 Local playable spaces.



## Chapter 8

# Quality and value assessment

**8.1** This chapter summarises the results from the site audits that were undertaken as part of the study. 385 sites were visited throughout Nottingham City, and 344 were subject to a detailed audit based on the Green Flag Award themes, as the other sites were not publicly accessible. Full site audits are shown in **Appendix G**. The Green Flag Award is a recognised benchmark standard for open space management in the UK and internationally. Detailed criteria have been developed that are suitable for the Nottingham context and have been categorised as relating to either:

- 'value' (the presence of various features and facilities, and value to the local community); or
- 'quality' (aspects relating to management and the condition of features and facilities).

**8.2** The box below provides an overview of the Green Flag themes considered as part of the site audits.

### Assessment themes (based on Green Flag Award criteria)

- A Welcoming Place: Welcoming, good & safe access, signage, equal access for all.
- Healthy, Safe and Secure: Safe equipment & facilities, personal security, dog fouling, appropriate provision of facilities, quality of facilities.
- Clean and Well Maintained: Litter & waste management, grounds maintenance & horticulture, building & infrastructure maintenance.
- Sustainability: Environmental sustainability, waste minimisation, arboriculture & woodland management.
- Conservation and Heritage: Conservation of nature features, wild flora & fauna, conservation of landscape features, conservation of buildings & structures.
- Community Involvement: Community involvement in management & development including outreach work, appropriate provision for the community
- Marketing and Culture: Marketing & promotion, provision of appropriate information, provision of appropriate education interpretation/information.

## A welcoming place

### Entrances

**8.3** Entrances can make a contribution to how sites are perceived by potential visitors and local residents. In order to be inviting, entrances should be open, clean, in a good state of repair and provide some visibility in and out of the site. The results of the site audit, shown at **Figure 8.1**, indicate that the quality of entrances varies across the typologies. Provision for Children and Young People are generally expected to have obvious, easy to find entrances that have an entrance sign. Provision for Children and Young People achieved the highest proportion of 'very good' scores for this criterion, followed by Cemeteries, Churches and Disused Churchyards. Natural and Semi Natural spaces often do not have an obvious entrance, and this typology had the highest proportion of 'very poor' scores, followed by Parks and Gardens. Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms achieved the highest proportion of 'fair' scores. No Outdoor Sports Facilities achieved 'good' or 'very good' scores.

### Signage

**8.4** Up to date, clear, good quality signage that is accessible and readable for a range of users gives an indication of whether a site is well cared for and can enhance the experience for new and regular users. For larger sites and Natural and Semi Natural sites, signage can be used to indicate promoted walking and cycling routes and provide information as to what facilities are on site.

**8.5** As shown on **Figure 8.2** signage within Parks and Gardens was very variable, with a roughly equal proportion scoring 'poor/very poor' and 'good/very good'. Natural and Semi Natural spaces had the highest proportion of 'very poor' scores. These sites generally have few facilities, although they would be expected to have a wide diversity of habitats..

Provision for Children and Young People had the smallest proportion of 'very poor' scores. Play provision often includes signage detailing the rules and regulations for using the play equipment.

### Quality of access

**8.6** The audits included an assessment of the quality of access to the open space and quality of access within and through the open space.

**8.7** The quality of access to open spaces may be influenced by several factors. Some sites benefit from good access via several modes of transport, such as nearby public transport links, provision of car parking, cycle paths and cycle parking. Where located within urban areas, Amenity Green Spaces should offer easy access for informal recreation close to resident's homes. Within Nottingham, topographical variations may also influence the use of some sites and limits good access.

**8.8** Parks and Gardens, due to the range of facilities that may be provided, require careful consideration of the Equality Act (2010). Any type of open space will be able to provide a wider range of benefits to the local community if they have good Access for All, and can better used by the elderly, infirm and people with physical disabilities.

**8.9** All typologies performed well against this criterion, as shown on **Figure 8.3**, with all scores for Provision for Children and Young People 'fair' to 'very good'. Natural and Semi Natural spaces had the highest proportion of 'very poor' and 'poor scores'. Natural and Semi Natural spaces within Nottingham City have fewer surfaced paths, and many follow the network of rivers and canals, which generally do not provide good access.

**8.10 Figure 8.4:** provides supporting images that illustrate some of the key findings of this Green Flag Award theme.

Figure 8.1: Extent to which the entrances are well presented

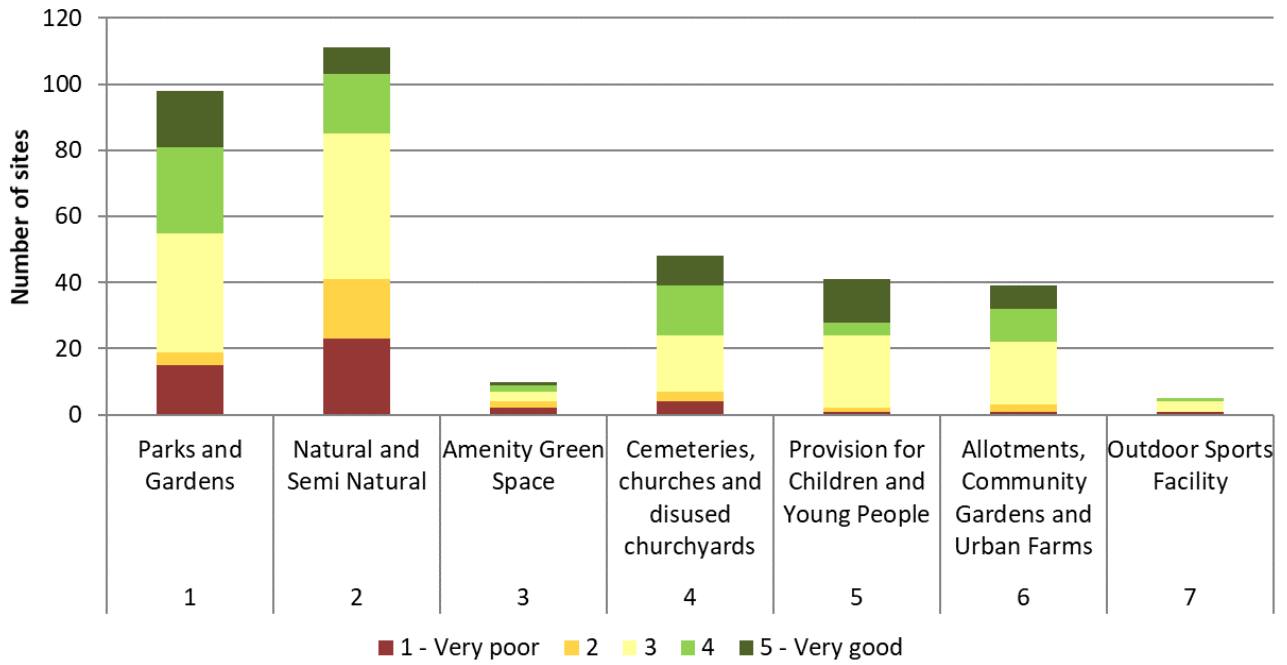


Figure 8.2: Overall provision of signage

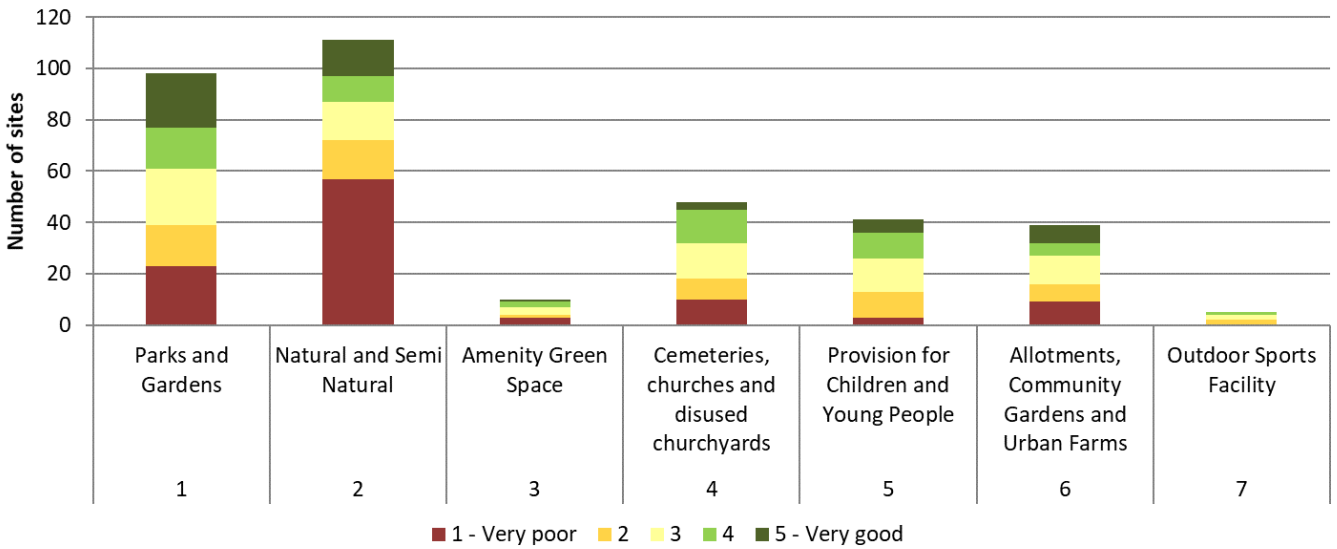


Figure 8.3: Overall quality of access and accesses within and through the open space

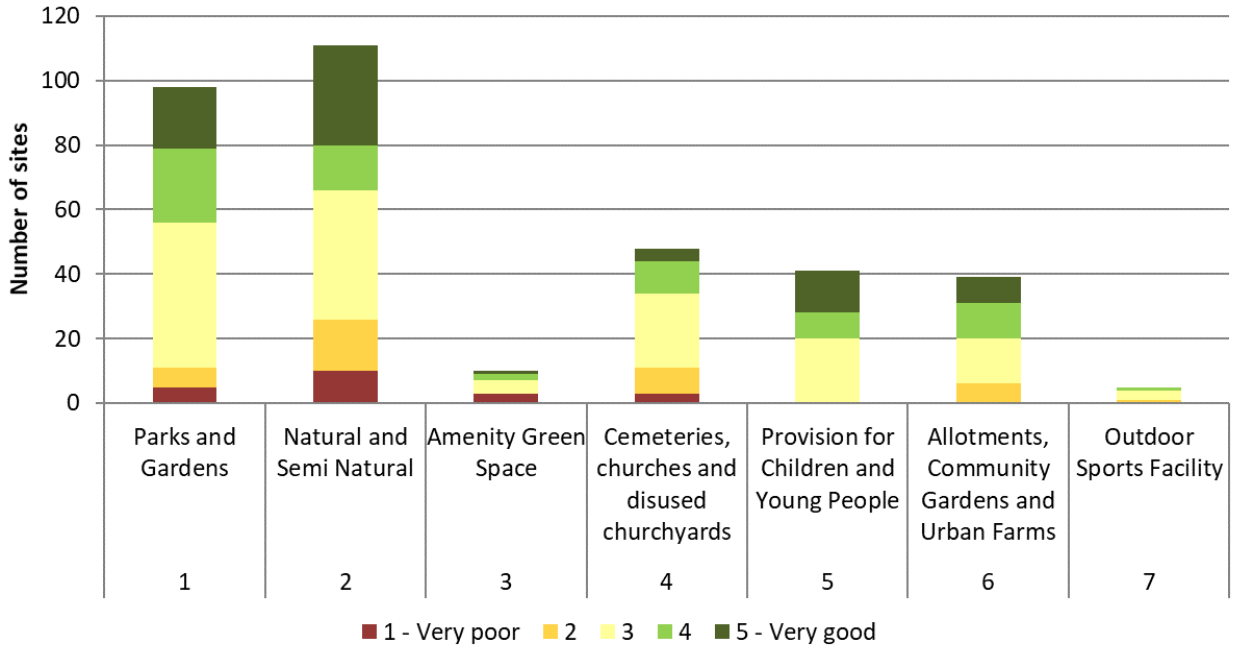


Figure 8.4: A welcoming place – summary of audit results



Welcoming entrance at Bulwell Forest Garden



Boardwalks provide access over ponds at Whitemoor Nature Reserve



Poor quality entrance at Basford Road Burial Ground



Good quality signage at Holme Pit SSSI



Poor internal access at St Matthew's on the Hill



Welcoming entrance at Chediston Vale Park

### Healthy, safe and secure

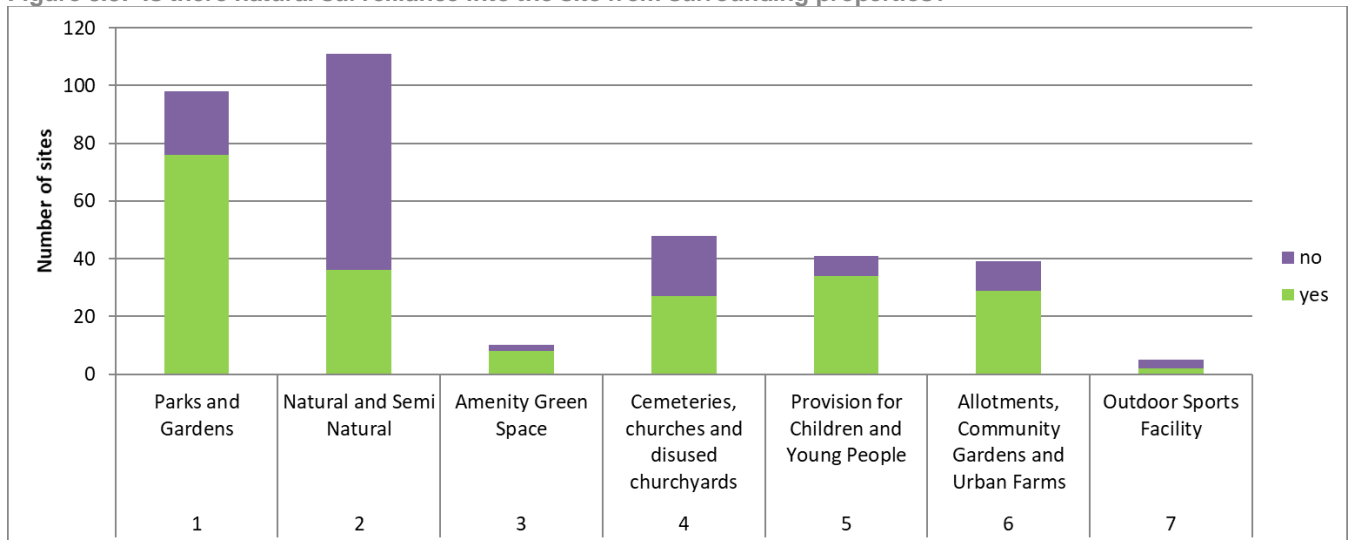
**8.11** Criteria under this Green Flag Award theme relate to facilities, site attributes and management aspects that encourage and facilitate active and informal recreation, and healthy lifestyles.

**8.12** Residents of all ages, abilities and backgrounds should feel comfortable entering and using open spaces. Fostering a sense of safety and security can be achieved through appropriate management and design and may help encourage users of all ages and abilities to enjoy and utilise their local park or open space.

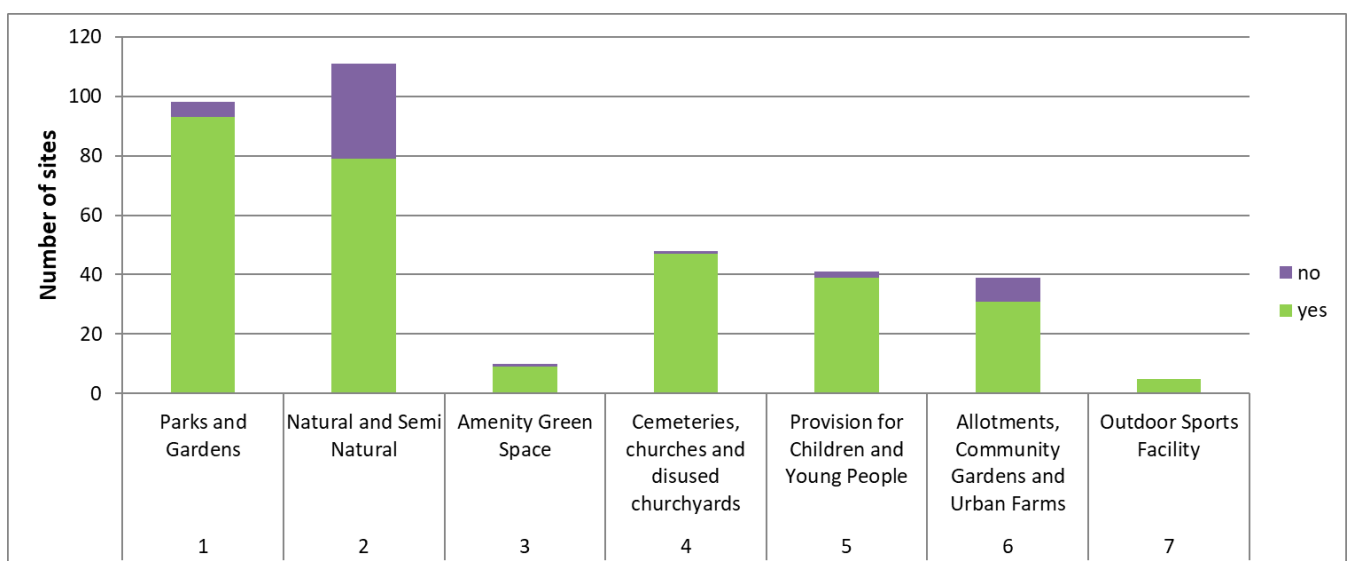
**8.13** As indicated in **Figure 8.5**, Parks and Gardens, Amenity Green Space, Provision for Children and Young People and Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms all performed well in terms of allowing natural surveillance from surrounding residential properties.

**8.14** Most Natural and Semi Natural sites do not benefit from natural surveillance. This may be due to a number of factors, including a predominance of tree cover, sites being located away from dense urban development or sites that are large with few adjoining properties. Just under half of the Cemeteries, Churches and Disused Churchyards sites did not exhibit natural surveillance. Those without natural surveillance may be due to high boundary walls or large sites with few adjoining properties.

**Figure 8.5: Is there natural surveillance into the site from surrounding properties?**



**Figure 8.6: Do the approaches feel open and secure?**



**8.15** The audit found that the approaches to the vast majority of open spaces feel open and secure (**Figure 8.6:**). Natural and Semi Natural sites are the exception, where roughly a quarter of the approaches were not considered to feel open and secure. A small proportion of Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms also performed poorly against this criterion. In many cases this may be due to poor visibility in and out of entrances, encroaching vegetation and a lack of entrances that appear 'intentional' or managed.

**8.16** Parks and Gardens and Natural and Semi Natural sites were found to have the highest proportion of sites with a flow of people through the space, shown in **Figure 8.7:**.

**8.17** A flow of people indicates a site that is well used, and can often be influenced by a site's location; for instance where a site functions as a through route or thoroughfare such as at Forest Recreation Ground. The results of this criteria will be influenced by the time of day and weather conditions when the site audit was undertaken but provides an indication of sites that may suffer from a reduced sense of safety and security.

**8.18** **Figure 8.8:** below provides supporting images to illustrate some of the key findings from this Green Flag Award theme.

**Figure 8.7: Is there a flow of people through the open space?**

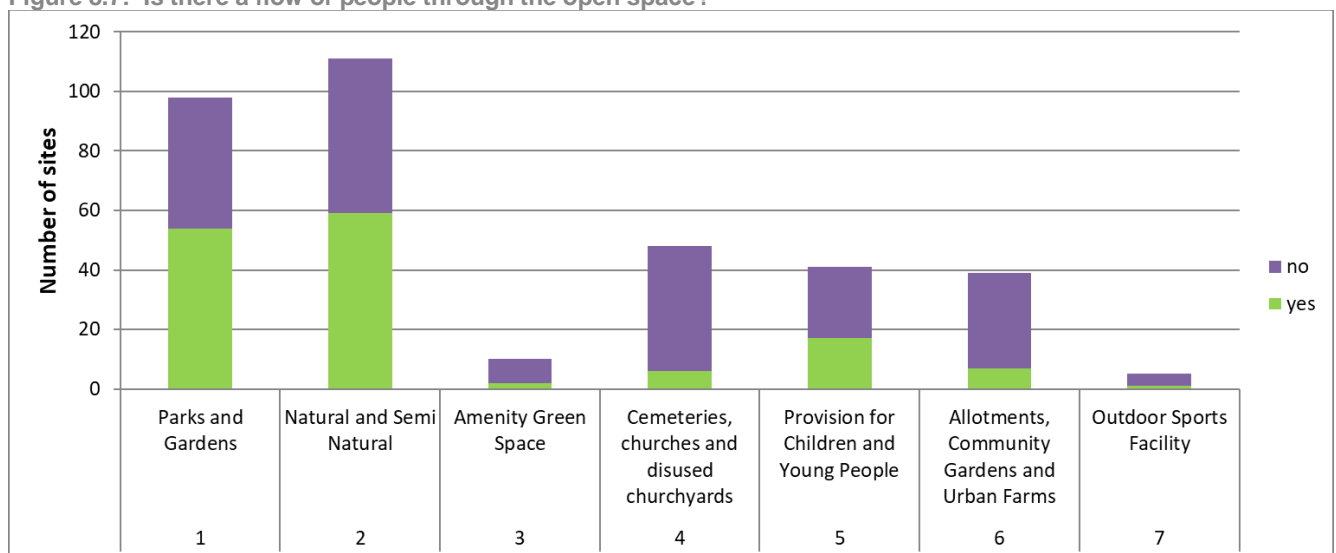


Figure 8.8: Healthy, safe and secure – summary of audit results



Vandalised fencing at Maples Street skate park



Good natural surveillance at Penn Avenue Open Space



Provision of life belts at Colwick Country Park



Poor perception of safety at the entrance to Hayden Garth Open Space



Open, safe entrance at Lenton Abbey Park



Lighting and natural surveillance at Penn Avenue play area

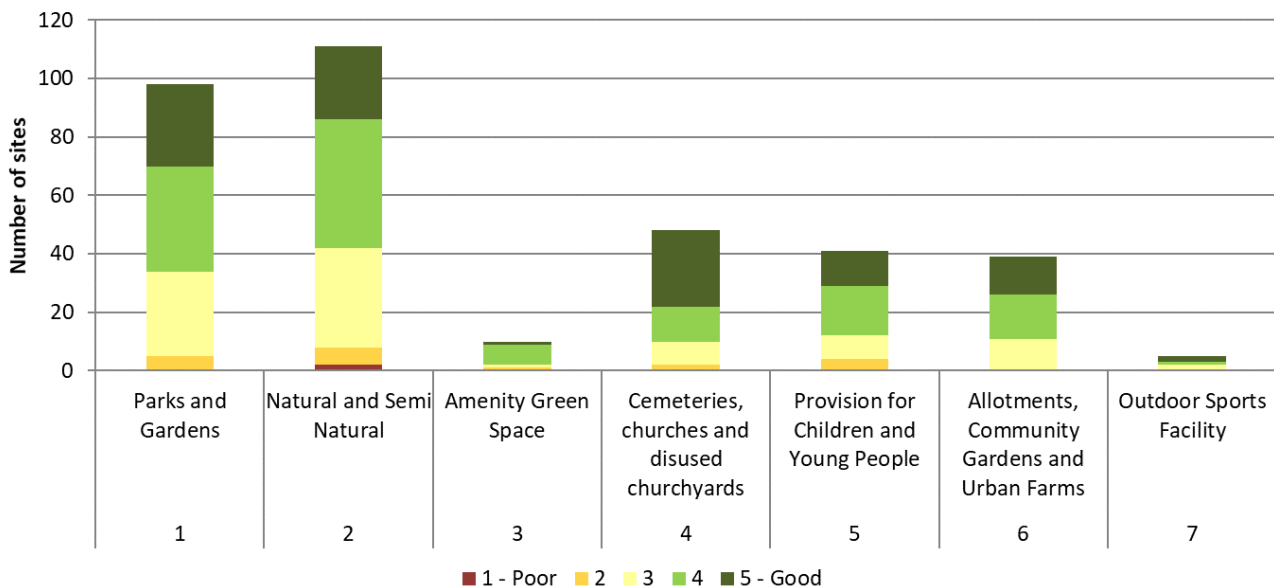


## Well maintained and clean

### Cleanliness

**8.19** The overall level of cleanliness was generally found to be good (see **Figure 8.9:**), with the majority of sites scoring 'good' or 'very good'. Natural and Semi Natural sites and Amenity Green Spaces were the only typologies to have 'very poor' scores.

**Figure 8.9: Overall cleanliness**



### Planted and grass areas

**8.2** **Figure 8.10:** and **Figure 8.11:** indicate the audit results for the overall condition of planted areas and overall condition of grass areas. Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms, Cemeteries, Churches and Disused Churchyards and Parks and Gardens had the highest proportion of sites with planted areas, and generally performed better in comparison to the other typologies. No planted areas were scored as 'very poor'.

**8.3** Unsurprisingly the Parks and Gardens typology had the greatest proportion of grassed areas, shown in **Figure 8.11:**. The condition of the grassed areas within Parks and Gardens is also higher than the other typologies, with a majority of 'good' or 'very good' scores. However, the majority of sites with grassed areas scored 'fair'.

Figure 8.10: Overall condition of planted areas

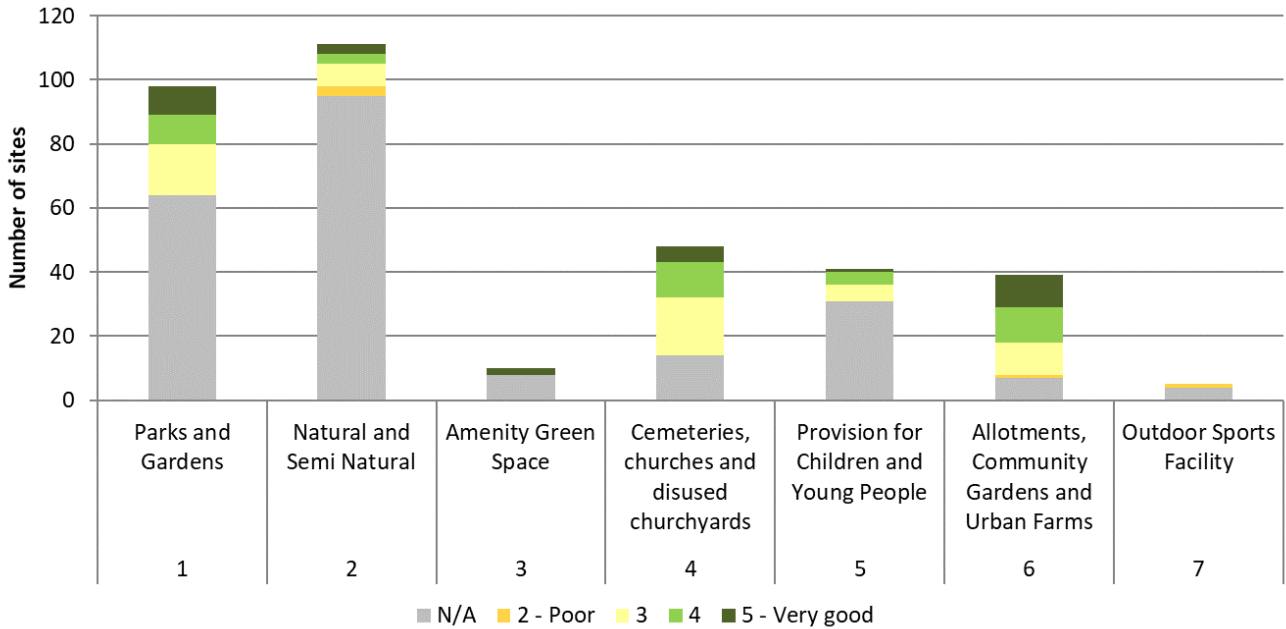
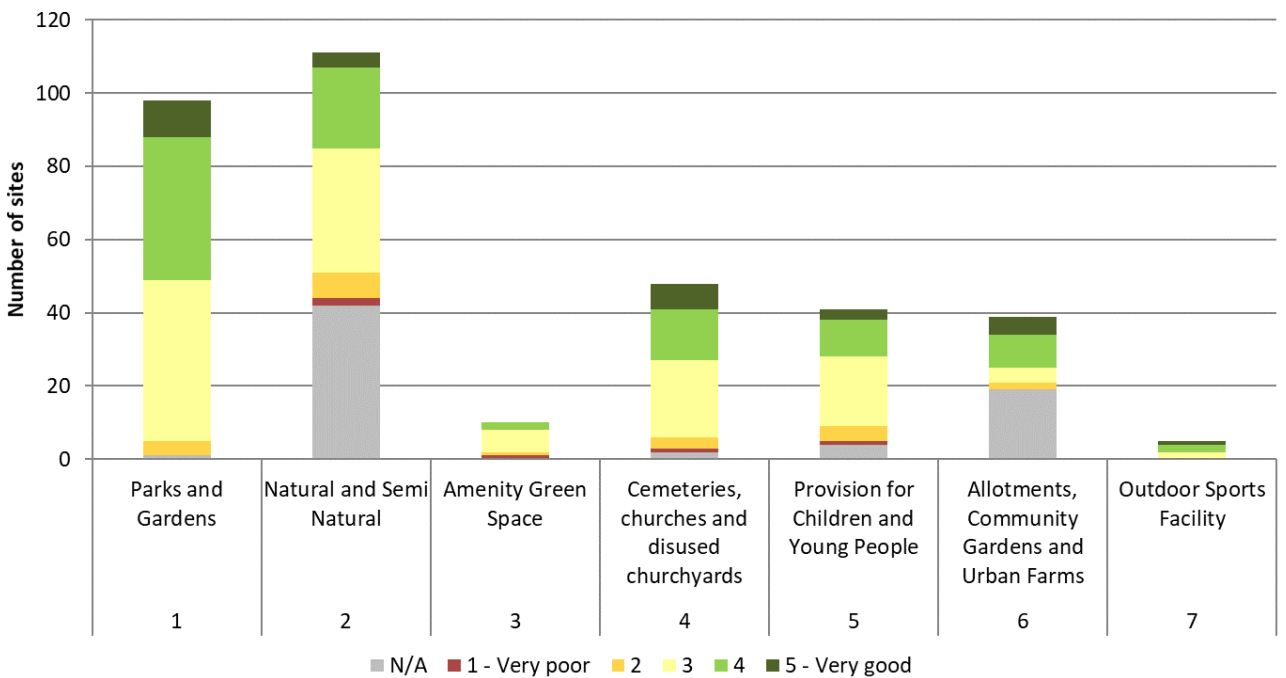


Figure 8.11: Overall condition of grassed areas



### Footpaths

**8.4** The condition of footpaths can have a significant impact upon quality of access within and through a site and can limit the range of users that may access and benefit from site features, facilities and amenities. **Figure 8.12:** shows the results relating to the overall condition of footpaths, meaning that some sites with a low score may still contain some good quality paths (and vice versa). Some sites, particularly

Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms do not contain a recognisable network of footpaths.

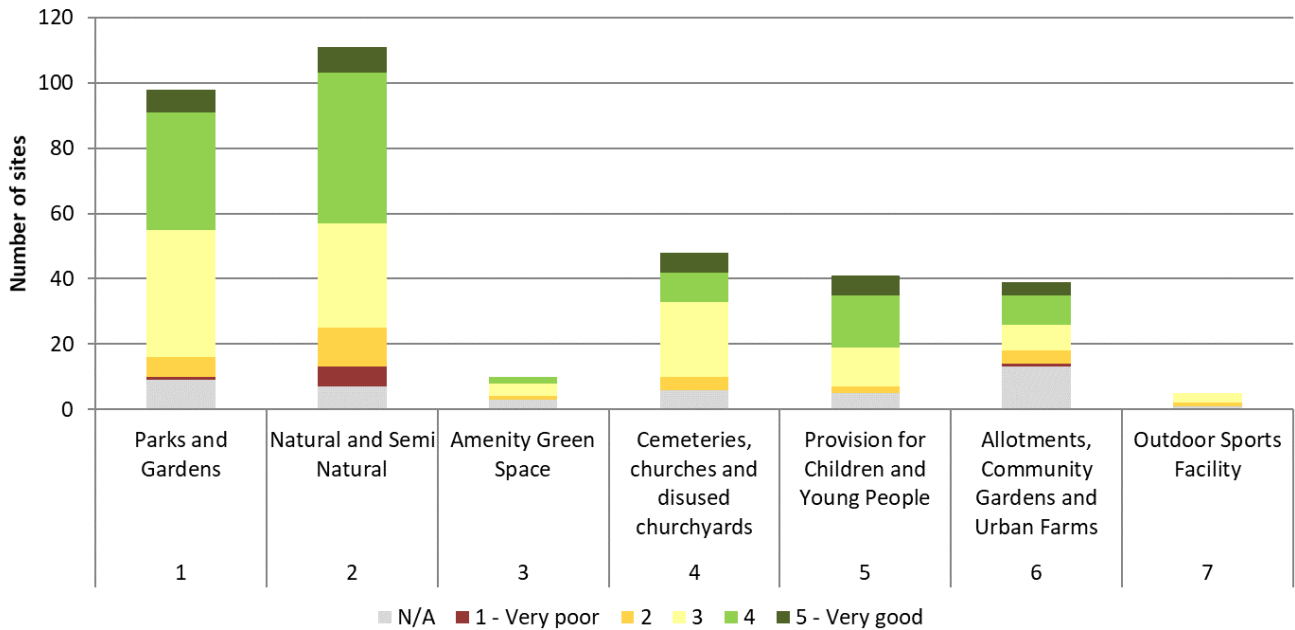
### Buildings

**8.5** As shown in **Figure 8.13:** the vast majority of sites do not contain buildings. Buildings are most commonly found in Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms (often sheds or community hubs), Cemeteries, Churches and

Disused Churchyards (predominantly churches or chapels of rest), and in Parks and Gardens. The condition of the majority of buildings was found to be 'good' or 'very good'. Lower scores may be as a result of issues around graffiti, vandalism or a general lack of maintenance.

**8.6 Figure 8.14:** provides supporting images to illustrate some of the key findings from this Green Flag Award theme.

**Figure 8.12: Overall condition of footpaths**



**Figure 8.13: Overall condition of buildings**

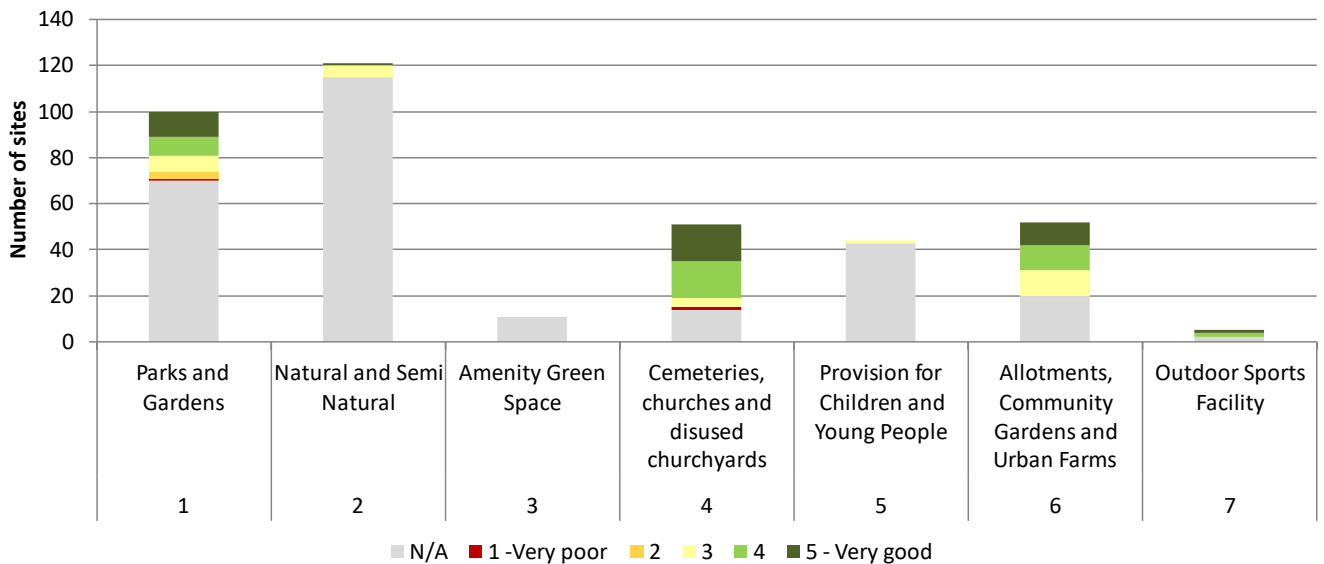


Figure 8.14: Clean and well maintained – summary of audit results



Grassed area in good condition at Scafell Way Open Space



Graffiti parallel to the Nottingham canal



Fly tipping at St Francis' disused churchyard



Good quality planted areas at Queens Walk Recreation Ground



Footpaths in good condition along the River Leen

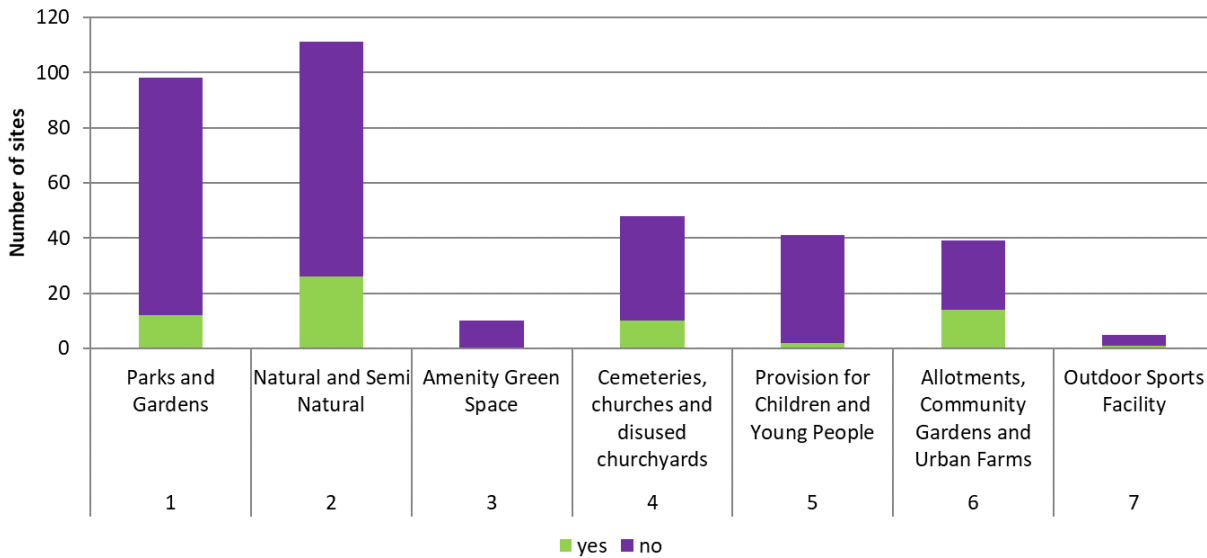


Chapel at Basford Cemetery in state of disrepair

## Environmental management

**8.7** Open spaces can perform a range of functions with regards to environmental sustainability. Sustainable management practices within open spaces may include good waste management, composting, drought tolerant planting, water harvesting, mulching or the use of solar panels on park

**Figure 8.15: Evidence of sustainable management practices**



buildings. **Figure 8.15:** show a summary of scores for this criterion.

**8.8** Several open spaces are also situated so that they perform a 'buffer' role and help absorb noise and pollutants from busy roads or industrial areas.

## Biodiversity, landscape and heritage

**8.9** Nottingham's network of open spaces includes landscapes and features that highlight the city's rich history. There are a number of Registered Parks and Gardens within Nottingham including Wollaton Hall, which is Grade II\* listed. It is an early 16th century park, which was developed into a landscape park in the late 18th century and has been a public park since 1926.

**8.10** The woods and watercourses throughout Nottingham are a distinctive feature of the city. These features make an important contribution to the character and wider landscape, and have influenced the pattern of built development.

**8.11** Open spaces provide a valuable role in terms of nature conservation and providing space for nature. As indicated in **Figure 8.16:**, Natural and Semi Natural sites exhibited the

highest proportion of indicators the site was being managed for nature conservation. These indicators included woodland management, reduced grass mowing regimes or planting for pollinators.

**8.12** Overall there was little indication of nature conservation across all typologies, albeit this was limited somewhat by seasonality. This does not necessarily mean that sites are not providing benefits for biodiversity, just that management techniques were not obvious at the time of the site audit. Typical indicators for management for nature conservation include variability in the length of grass sward, presence of bat / bird boxes or the retention of dead wood / log piles.

**8.13** **Figure 8.17:** below provides supporting images to illustrate some of the key findings from these Green Flag Award themes

Figure 8.16: Indication that features are being managed for nature conservation

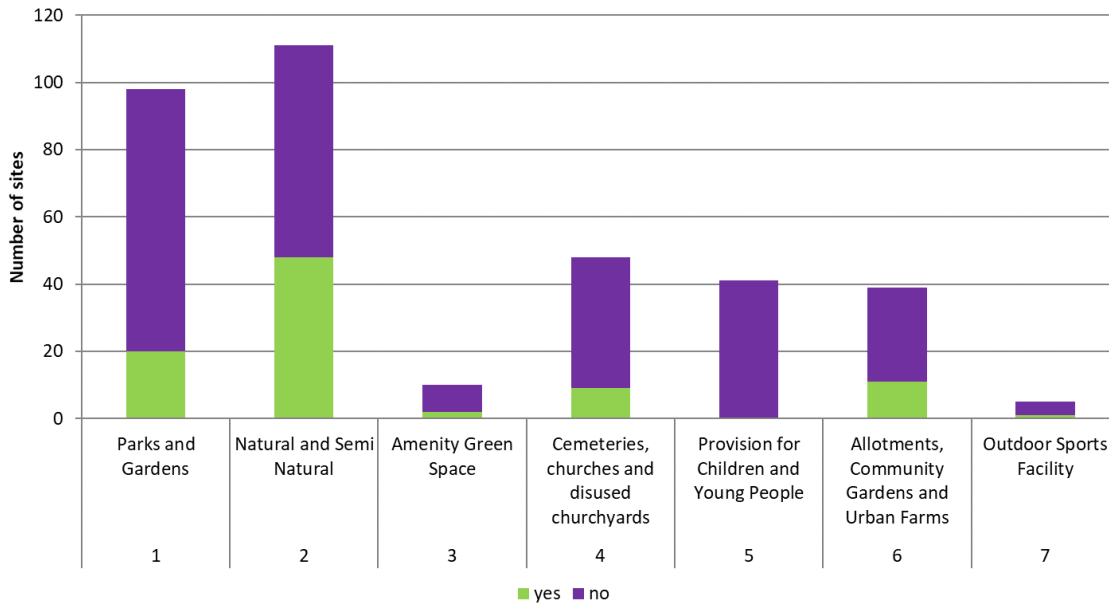


Figure 8.17: Sustainability / Conservation and heritage – summary of audit results



Deadwood providing a habitat for wild fungi at Clifton Woods LNR



Beehives at Bagthorpe Allotments



Close mown amenity grassland offers little biodiversity interest at Western Boulevard Play Area



Cycle parking at St Nicholas Church



Restored historic garden and pavilion at The Arboretum



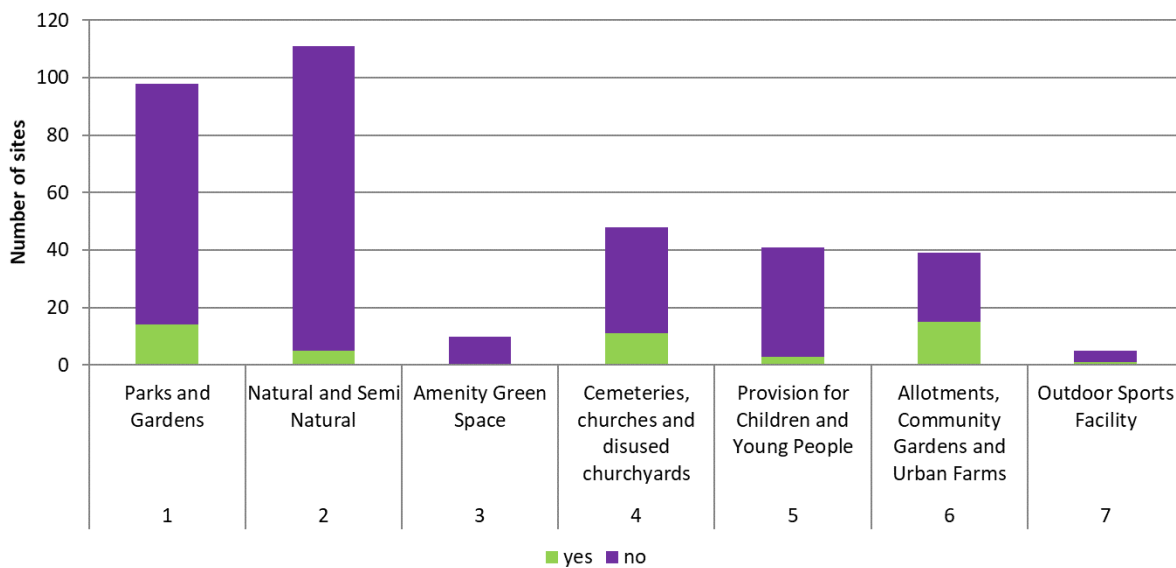
Marginal planting along the River Leen

## Community involvement

**8.14** Community groups may be involved in organising events, volunteering opportunities or other organised activities. Evidence of an active community group was noted on sites within each typology, with the exception of Amenity Green Spaces, as shown in **Figure 8.18**:. This evidence primarily comprised posters or signage advertising group meetings or events. However, this does not necessarily indicate that

groups are involved in active management of a site or are a recognised 'friends group'. Similarly, lack of evidence noted on site at the time of the audit does not necessarily indicate that there is no community involvement. Active community groups were mainly associated with sites with Provision for Children and Young People, Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms and Parks and Gardens.

**Figure 8.18: Evidence of an active community group**



## Noticeboards

**8.2** Less than a third of open spaces in Nottingham have a permanent public noticeboard, as shown in **Figure 8.19**:. Only Cemeteries, Churches and Disused Churchyards had a majority of sites with a public noticeboard. A public noticeboard would not necessarily be expected in some open spaces, such as Amenity Green Spaces.

**8.3** Slightly more sites had temporary notices on site, informing users about current developments, as shown in **Figure 8.20**: Only Outdoor Sports Facilities were found to have no current temporary notices on site. This is to be expected due to the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions which were in place when the site audits were undertaken.



Figure 8.19: Evidence of permanent public noticeboards on site

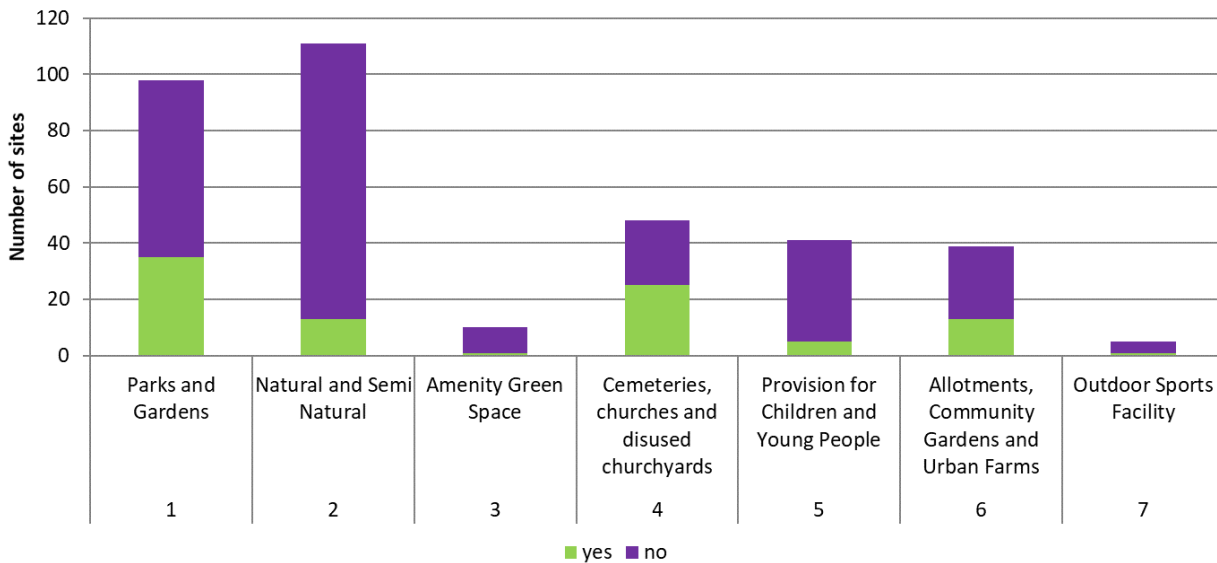
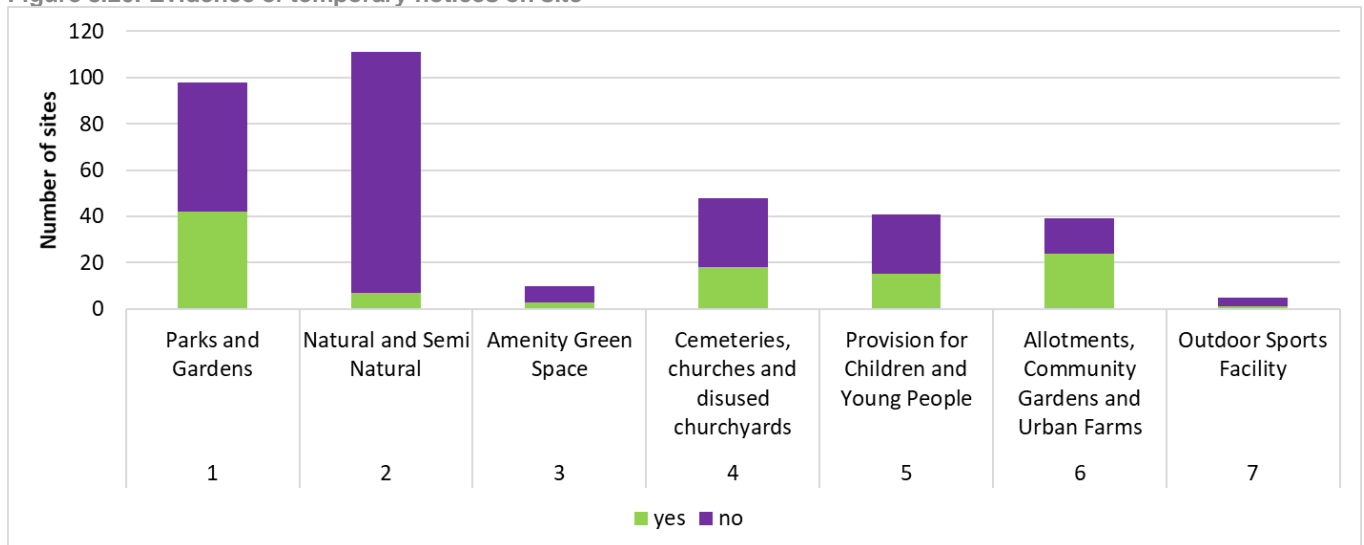


Figure 8.20: Evidence of temporary notices on site



## Marketing and communication

**8.2** The majority of open spaces in Nottingham do not contain public art, as shown in **Figure 8.21**. Parks and Gardens and sites with Provision for Children and Young People recorded the highest percentages of public art, at around 10%.

**8.3** There were limited sites with evidence of programmes of cultural or community activities, as shown in **Figure 8.22**. The only typologies to show evidence for these activities were

Parks and Gardens, Amenity Green Space and Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms. A lack of evidence does not necessarily mean that there is no programme of cultural or community activities, just that these were not present at the time of the audit. The on-going Covid-19 restrictions are also likely to have had an impact on any cultural and community events scheduled for open spaces.

**8.4** **Figure 8.23**: below provides supporting images to illustrate some of the key findings from these Green Flag Award themes.

Figure 8.21: Presence of public art

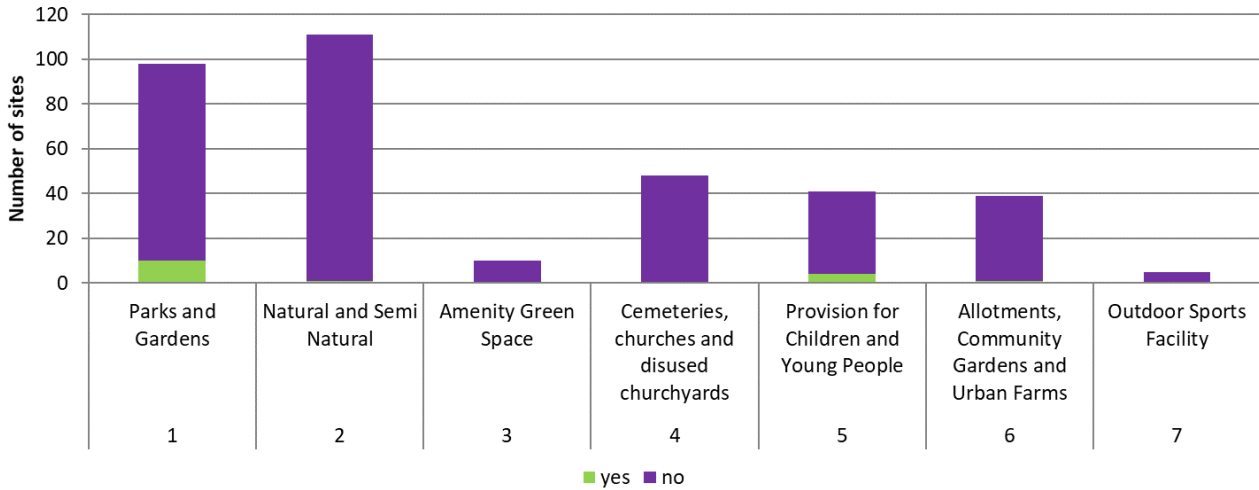


Figure 8.22: Evidence of a programme of cultural or other community events

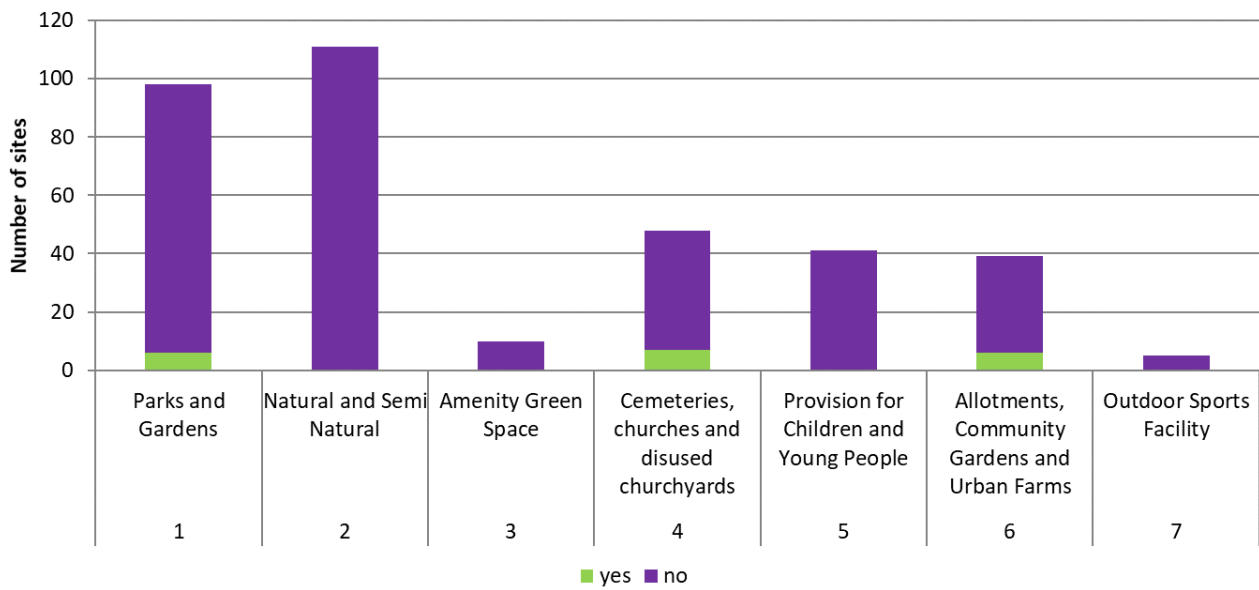


Figure 8.23: Community involvement / Marketing and culture – summary of audit results



Interpretation features parallel Hucknall Walkway



Public art at Lenton Priory Park



Local features of interest at Highfields Park



Informative signage at Lenton Recreation Ground, although in poor condition



Active community noticeboard at Ruddington Lane Park

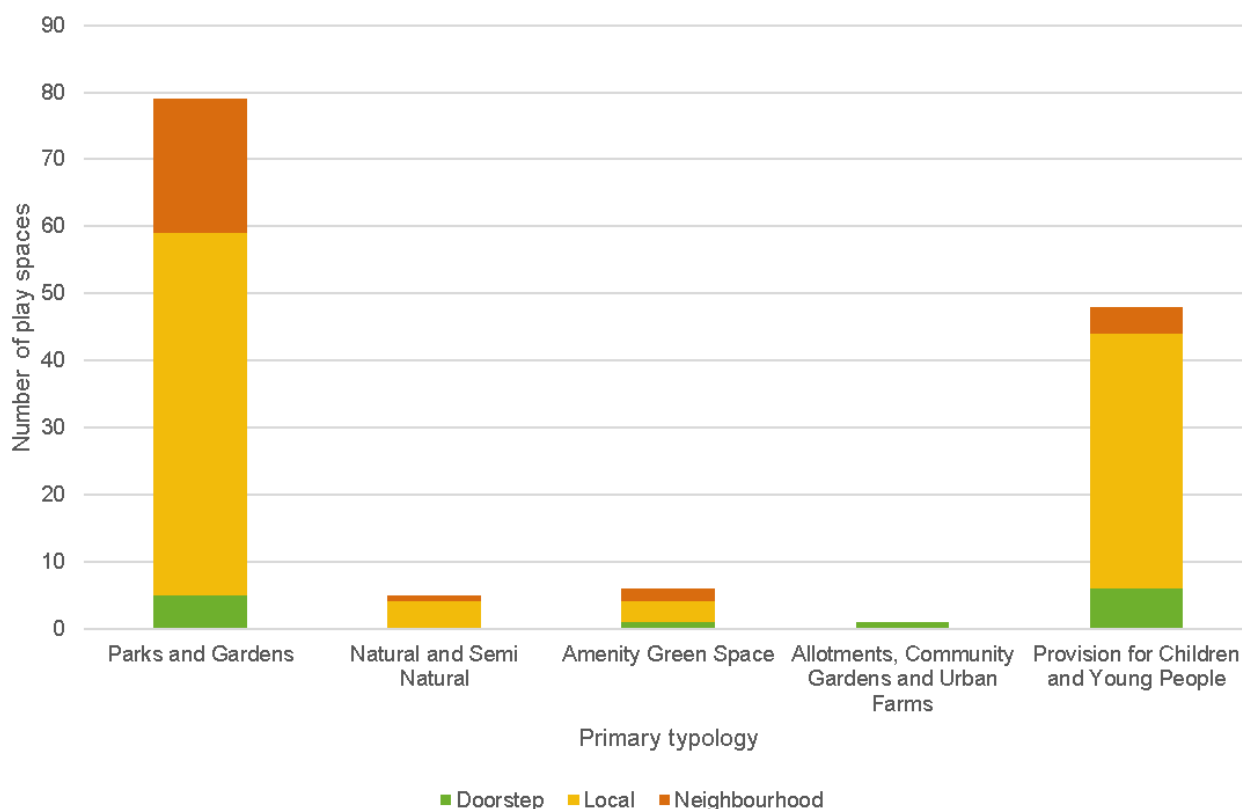


Sculpture at the entrance to Bulwell Forest Recreation Ground

## Equipped play facilities

8.5 Equipped play facilities generally occur within Parks and Gardens or as standalone play areas that are categorised within primary typology Provision for Children and Young People (see **Figure 8.24**):

Figure 8.24: Number of play areas located within each open space typology



8.6 The Council has a duty under sections 3 and 4 of the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) to ensure the health and safety of users, so far as is reasonably practical. Therefore, it should generally be expected that play facilities will be in good, safe condition. Overall, the audit did find most equipped play facilities to be in a generally good state of repair.

8.7 The overall condition of play facilities was generally considered to be 'fair', 'good' or 'very good', whilst a small number of sites were considered to be 'poor' or 'very poor'. Full details are shown below in **Table 8.1**:

Table 8.1: Overall conditions of each level of the play hierarchy

	Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
Destination	0	0	0	0	4
City	0	0	5	10	8
Neighbourhood	0	5	30	28	34
Local	0	1	4	6	4
<b>Total</b>	1	5	39	44	50

**8.8** Only one site was found to have play facilities in a 'very poor' condition. This was site 88A: Hood Street Play Area which has already been identified to receive funding for improvements.

### Other play facilities

**8.9** The overall condition of other play facilities was generally considered to be 'fair', 'good' or 'very good', with just one facility rating as 'poor' and no facilities scoring 'very poor'. Full details are shown in **Table 8.2:** below.

**Table 8.2: Overall conditions of other play facilities**

	Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
BMX track	0	0	1	0	1
Wheels park	0	0	4	3	0
Green gym	0	0	2	8	12
Trim trail	0	0	1	1	8
MUGA	0	0	18	9	11
Other	0	1	7	3	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>37</b>

## Chapter 9

# Development and application of proposed open space and play standards

**9.1** This chapter recommends open space provision standards. These have been developed through:

- Review of the existing provision of open space;
- Consideration of nationally recognised guidance, provision standards and regional planning policy; and
- Consideration of standards adopted by neighbouring authorities.

**9.2** Three types of open space standard are proposed for Nottingham:

- **Accessibility:** The maximum distance residents should be required to travel to use an open space of a specific typology;
- **Quantity:** The provision (measured in number of sites or hectares) of each open space typology (or groups of typologies) which should be provided as a minimum per 1000 population; and
- **Quality and Value:** The quality and value expected of open spaces in each typology, assessed using the Green Flag criteria.

**9.3** Accessibility standards have not been set for Cemeteries, Churches and Disused Churchyards. Standards for Outdoor Sports Facility facilities are addressed within the Nottingham Playing Pitch Strategy: Strategy & Action Plan Update 2018.

**9.4** Quantity standards have been set for the following typologies:

- Parks and Gardens;
- Natural and Semi Natural;
- Amenity Green Space;
- Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms; and
- Provision for Children and Young People.

### Accessibility assessment

**9.5** The assessment of accessibility standards has been informed through a review of the following:

Breathing Space: Revitalising Nottingham's Open and Green Spaces (2011)

- CABE (2009) Open Space Strategies: Best Practice Guidance.
- Fields in Trust (2015) Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard

**9.6** Accessibility standards have been set for the following types of open space:

- Parks and Gardens;
- Natural and Semi Natural;
- Amenity Green Space;
- Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms; and
- Provision for Children and Young People.

**9.7** Where appropriate, separate accessibility standards have been proposed for each level of the open space hierarchy that is set in **Table 7.2:** and **Table 7.3:**.

**9.8** Accessibility standards are expressed as average walk time distances converted into straight line 'buffers' measured from the boundary of each site. This is shown in **0.**

**Table 9.1: Calculating walk times**

Straight line distance	Walking time (minutes)
5km	60
1km	15
800m	10
600m	4

**9.9** In order to test the accessibility standards adopted in similar areas, a review has been undertaken of those adopted in neighbouring local authorities. These are shown in **Appendix D** below alongside Nottingham's existing accessibility standards. The results of the public consultation were also reviewed to further understand the suitability of the current adopted accessibility standards.

**9.10** The standards that have been set reflect the generally accepted principle that people are willing to travel varying distances to reach different types of open space and are willing to travel further to sites which have a wider 'offer' and range of facilities. The results of the consultation indicate that the majority of respondents are able to access an open space on foot (78% of respondents are able to walk to an open space and over 50% of respondents travelled to a park by walking). Over 75% of respondents are able to reach their open space within a 15 minute travel time with 27% of respondents able to reach an open space within 5 minutes. Larger sites generally provide more variety in terms of opportunities for recreation, access to nature and act as a more significant 'destination' for potential visitors.

**9.11** The proposed accessibility standards are shown in **Table 9.20** below

**Table 9.2: Accessibility standards**

Typology	Hierarchy	Proposed standard
Parks and Gardens	Destination	5000m
	City	1000m
	Neighbourhood	800m
	Local	600m
Natural and Semi Natural	Destination	5000m
	City	1000m
	Neighbourhood	800m
	Local	600m

Typology	Hierarchy	Proposed standard
Amenity Green Space	n/a	300m
Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms	n/a	1000m
Provision for Children and Young People	Destination	5000m
	City	1000m
	Neighbourhood	800m
	Local	600m
	Other	n/a

## Quantity assessment

**9.12** Quantity standards have been proposed for:

- Parks and Gardens;
- Natural and Semi Natural;
- Amenity Green Space;
- Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms; and
- Provision for Children and Young People.

**9.13** In line with recognised guidance quantity standards are expressed as hectares per 1,000 residents (ha/1,000). A standard has been proposed for the total quantity of **public open space**.

### Public open space

For the purposes of this assessment **public open space** comprises the following typologies:

- Parks and Gardens
- Natural and Semi Natural
- Amenity Green Space

**9.14** A quantity standard has not been set for Cemeteries, Churches and Disused Churchyards. Quantity provision of Cemeteries, Churches and Disused Churchyards should be defined by demand and assessments of local need for burial space.

**9.15** The proposed quantity standards are shown in **Table 9.3**.

**Table 9.3: Proposed quantity standards**

Typology	Proposed quantity standard (ha/1,000)	Rationale
Public open space. The combined quantity of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Parks and Gardens</li> <li>■ Natural and Semi Natural</li> <li>■ Amenity Green Space (including sites where no access information was available)</li> </ul>	3.88 ha per 1,000 population  <b>Current population: 305,680</b>	The proposed standard has been set as the existing provision for the whole city.
Allotment, Community Garden and Urban Farm	0.125 ha per 1,000 population  <b>Current population: 305,680</b>	The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) have suggested a national standard of 0.125 ha per 1000 population based on an average plot size of 250 square metres, however this is not referred to on the NSALG website.



Typology	Proposed quantity standard (ha/1,000)	Rationale
Provision for Children and Young People and young people	0.17 ha per 1,000 population (aged 19 and under) /  <b>Current population aged 19 and under: 84,634</b>	The Council's previous 2008 audit proposed a quantity standard of 0.21 ha per 1,000 population.

### Application of the proposed quantity standards

**9.16 Table 9.4** shows the current provision (ha/1000) broken down by ward across Nottingham City against the proposed quantity standards set out in **Table 9.3**. Analysis has been undertaken using the current (2018) borough population, and population projections up to 2050. The cells coloured green achieve or are above the quantity standard. The cells in orange fall below the quantity standard.

**9.17** Public open space refers to the combined quantity of Parks and Gardens, Natural and Semi Natural and Amenity

Green Space (including sites where no access information was available).

**9.18** The population projections for 2050 have been calculated using 2043 projections from Nomis with an average growth rate applied<sup>19</sup>. To generate the 0-19 year totals by ward for 2050, Nomis 2043 projections were used to understand the proportion of the population who are 0-19 years at the date. That proportion was applied to the 2050 figure generated by the council to get a total figure for 0-19 years at 2050. The ward breakdown of 0-19 years provided by the council for 2018 were then applied to the 2050 0-19 year totals to generate ward figures for 2050. The projections to 2050 are indicative estimates.

**Table 9.4: Current and future open space provision by ward against proposed quantity standards**

Ward	2018 public open space per 1,000 population	2050 public open space per 1,000 population	2018 Allotment, Community Garden and Urban Farm per 1,000 population	2050 Allotment, Community Garden and Urban Farm per 1,000 population	2018 Provision for Children and Young People per 1,000 children	2050 Provision for Children and Young People per 1,000 children
Aspley	2.45	1.99	0.06	0.05	0.06	0.05
Basford	2.18	1.77	0.99	0.81	0.27	0.24
Berridge	0.36	0.29	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.06
Bestwood	1.26	1.02	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.03
Bilborough	3.10	2.52	0.33	0.27	0.11	0.10
Bulwell	10.91	8.87	0.52	0.42	0.42	0.38
Bulwell Forest	3.53	2.87	0.08	0.06	0.41	0.37
Castle	0.80	0.65	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Clifton East	2.57	2.09	0.25	0.20	0.18	0.16
Clifton West	8.59	6.98	0.67	0.55	0.62	0.56
Dales	9.85	8.00	0.62	0.50	0.09	0.09

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/datasets/pestnew>

Ward	2018 public open space per 1,000 population	2050 public open space per 1,000 population	2018 Allotment, Community Garden and Urban Farm per 1,000 population	2050 Allotment, Community Garden and Urban Farm per 1,000 population	2018 Provision for Children and Young People per 1,000 children	2050 Provision for Children and Young People per 1,000 children
Hyson Green & Arboretum	1.82	1.48	0.00	0.00	0.16	0.14
Leen Valley	3.36	2.73	2.63	2.14	0.26	0.23
Lenton & Wollaton East	3.77	3.06	0.19	0.15	0.13	0.12
Mapperley	1.15	0.94	1.94	1.58	0.10	0.09
Meadows	5.32	4.32	0.04	0.03	0.31	0.28
Radford	0.28	0.22	0.00	0.00	0.18	0.16
Sherwood	2.24	1.82	0.16	0.13	0.22	0.20
St Ann's	1.06	0.86	0.18	0.15	0.18	0.17
Wollaton West	15.26	12.40	0.55	0.45	0.18	0.16
<b>Nottingham</b>	<b>3.88</b>	<b>3.15</b>	<b>0.41</b>	<b>0.33</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>0.16</b>

**9.19 Table 9.4** shows there is considerable variation in current provision between the wards, and this is set to continue in the future. By 2050 Nottingham as a whole will be below the quantity standards for public open space (including Parks and Gardens, Natural and Semi Natural and Amenity Green Space) and Provision for Children and Young People. Five wards (Apsley, Berridge, Bestwood, Castle and Hyson Green & Arboretum) fall below all quantity standards based on current population and project population in 2050.

**9.20** All wards which are currently at or above the quantity standard for public open space and Allotment, Community Garden and Urban Farms will still be above the quantity standard in 2050.

**9.21** By 2050 Clifton East, Radford and Wollaton West, which currently meet the quantity standard for Provision for Children and Young People, will fall below the quantity standard. All other wards currently above the quantity standard for Provision for Children and Young People will remain above the standard.

### Quality and value assessment

**9.22** Open spaces in the city have been subject to a site audit based on the Green Flag Award criteria. In order to assess the sites consistently the audit forms were completed using the

scoring system shown in **Appendix B**. A map of open spaces which have been audited as part of the study is included within **Appendix E**.

**9.23** The audit criteria were separated into factors relating to quality and value, resulting in each site being assigned a quality score and a value score. As set out by the (former) Planning Practice Guidance 17 (PPG17) Companion Guide "quality and value are fundamentally different and can be completely unrelated". For example, an open space may be of higher quality but if it is not accessible it is of little value, while if an open space is poor quality but has a wide range of facilities it is potentially of higher value.

### Quality

**9.24** As part of the site audit, the condition of various features and facilities of each site were rated on a five-point scale, shown in **Figure 9.1**. This assessment has then been transposed through a scoring system into a total quality score for the whole site.

**9.25** In order to develop a quality standard which is appropriate for the type and function of open spaces in Nottingham, the existing quality of provision has been reviewed by typology and the associated hierarchy level (where relevant). Through reviewing the range of quality

scores, it has been possible to form a quality threshold score, i.e. a minimum level of quality which should be achieved at any open space. A threshold score has been defined for each typology and each level of the hierarchy reflecting the ideal score scenario for a good quality site.

Figure 9.1: Five-point scoring scale

1 – very poor
2 – poor
3 – fair
4 – good
5 – very good

### Value

**9.26** Value is fundamentally different from quality; a space can be valued for a range of reasons even it is of low quality. Value mainly relates to the following:

- **Context:** e.g. an easily accessible space is higher value than one that is inaccessible to potential users, equally the value of a space may diminish if it is immediately adjacent to several others which provides the same function.
- **Level and type of use:** the primary purpose and associated use of a space can increase its value - well used spaces are of higher value to people, similarly spaces with diverse habitats can be well used by wildlife and can be interpreted as having a higher value.
- **Wider benefits:** i.e. the benefits a space generates for people, biodiversity and the wider environment including the following: landscape, ecological, education, social inclusion and health benefit, cultural and heritage, amenity benefits, 'sense of place' and economic benefits.

### Setting benchmark standards

**9.27** Open space standards have been set for quality and value. These standards provide a benchmark against which

each site may be assessed. Applying these standards provides a high-level overview of how open spaces are 'performing' across the city. Quality and value standards have been set for each typology and level of the size hierarchy (where appropriate), which ensures that sites are compared 'like for like' with sites that would be expected to provide a similar 'offer'.

Higher Quality / Higher Value	Higher Quality / Lower Value
++	+-
<p>These sites are considered to be the best open spaces within the city, offering the greatest value and quality for the surrounding communities.</p> <p>Future management should seek to maintain the standard for these spaces and ensure they continue to meet the requirements for the communities they serve.</p> <p>Ideally all spaces should fit into this category.</p>	<p>Wherever possible, the preferred management approach to a space in this category should aim to enhance its value in terms of its present primary typology or purpose.</p> <p>If this is not possible, the best policy approach is to consider whether it might be of high value if converted to another typology.</p>
Lower Quality / Higher Value	Lower Quality / Lower Value
-+	--
<p>These spaces meet or exceed the required value standard but fall below the required quality standard.</p> <p>Future management should therefore seek to enhance their quality to ensure that the open spaces are welcoming and safe for use by the local community.</p>	<p>These spaces are falling below the applicable value and quality standards and therefore their future enhancement should be considered to be a priority.</p>

**9.28** Development of the standards has taken into account what can reasonably be expected from open space and play space within Nottingham and also recognised national standards for parks and open space and play (e.g. Green Flag and Play England guidance). The intention is that the benchmark standards are aspirational (to promote improvements where required), yet realistically achievable.

**9.29** The proposed quality and value standards are set out in **Table 9.3**.

Table 9.5: Quality and value standards

Typology / hierarchy	Proposed quality standard	Proposed value standard	Example high quality site and score	Example high value site and score	Example low quality site and score	Example low value site and score
<b>Parks and Gardens</b>						
<b>Destination</b>	87	72	<b>Highfields Park 1 (NCC owned)</b> Score: 98	<b>Wollaton Park</b> Score: 99	<b>Greens Windmill</b> Score: 67	<b>Arboretum</b> Score: 34
<b>City</b>	74	61	<b>Bulwell Hall Park</b> Score: 93	<b>Forest Recreation Ground</b> Score: 108	<b>Brewhouse Yard</b> Score: 45	<b>Broxtowe Country Park</b> Score: 24
<b>Neighbourhood</b>	56	42	<b>Lenton Abbey Park</b> Score: 82	<b>Ruddington Lane Park</b> Score: 69	<b>Valley Road Park – Kick about Area</b> Score: 15	<b>Queens Walk</b> Score: 15
<b>Local</b>	38	26	<b>Fernwood Crescent (Rushford Drive) Park</b> Score: 64	<b>Snape Wood</b> Score: 59	<b>Keys Close Green</b> Score: 19	<b>Chalfont Drive Open Space</b> Score: 8
<b>Natural and Semi Natural</b>						
<b>Destination</b>	N/A					
<b>City</b>	37	19	<b>Colwick Country Park</b> Score: 92	<b>Mill Street Open Space (River Leen 9) -1</b> Score: 41	<b>Whitemoor Nature Reserve (River Leen 11) – 2</b> Score: 24	<b>Hucknall Road Walkway 1 – 3</b> Score: 9
<b>Neighbourhood</b>	35	17	<b>Iremongers Pond</b> Score: 73	<b>Silverdale Open Space</b> Score: 64	<b>Queens Drive Park and Ride Site (Crocus Meadows) – 2</b> Score: 15	<b>Colwick Woods – Bewick Drive</b> Score: 12
<b>Local</b>	27	16	<b>Springfield Corner Open Space (River Leen 1)</b> Score: 45	<b>Alexandrina Plantation LNR</b> Score: 47	<b>Tunstall Drive Woodland</b> Score: 7	<b>Land next to Bulwell BMX Track</b> Score: 5
<b>Amenity Green Space</b>						
No hierarchy has been established for Amenity Green Space.	35	25	<b>Torvill Drive Open Space</b> Score: 58	<b>Highbury Vale Park</b> Score: 49	<b>Tricketts Yard Open Space</b> Score: 16	<b>Salisbury Square Open Space</b> Score: 3
<b>Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms</b>						

Typology / hierarchy	Proposed quality standard	Proposed value standard	Example high quality site and score	Example high value site and score	Example low quality site and score	Example low value site and score
No hierarchy has been established for allotment or community garden.	55	16	<b>Arkwright Meadows Community Garden</b> Score: 84	<b>Stonebridge City Farm</b> Score: 44	<b>Aspley's Estate (E) 40 – 50</b> Score: 17	<b>Canal Allotments (Private)</b> Score: 5
Cemeteries, Churches and Disused Churchyards						
No hierarchy has been established for Cemeteries, Churches and Disused Churchyards	40	14	<b>Holy Trinity Church</b> Score: 59	<b>The United Reform Church</b> Score: 29	<b>St Matthews on the Hill</b> Score: 7	<b>Clifton Methodist Church</b> Score: 1
Provision for Children and Young People						
Equipped play facilities						
Local	5	14	<b>Stonebridge City Farm</b> Score: 5	<b>Forest Recreation Ground</b> Score: 15	<b>Hood Street Play Area</b> Score: 3	<b>Fearnleigh (aka Pennant Park)</b> Score: 7
Neighbourhood	5	21	<b>Hesky Park</b> Score: 6	<b>Barton Green Open Space</b> Score: 21	<b>Astley Drive Open Space</b> Score: 3	<b>Brewsters Road Play Area</b> Score: 8
City	5	26	<b>Lenton Abbey Park</b> Score: 6	<b>Silverdale Open Space</b> Score: 34	<b>Birchover Recreation Ground</b> Score: 3	<b>Chard Street Open Space</b> Score: 18

## Application of the proposed quality, value and accessibility standards

**9.30** A series of figures in this section shows the application of the quality, value and accessibility standards by typology. The findings are discussed by typology in turn. The full list of sites with their quality and value rating is shown in **Appendix F**.

**9.31** The open space standards have been applied as straight line 'buffers' from the boundaries of open spaces. The rationale behind this application is illustrated in **Figure 9.2**

### Parks and Gardens

#### Destination Parks and Gardens

**9.32** As shown in **Figure 9.3**, the majority of Nottingham has access to the six Destination Parks and Gardens within the city. Wollaton Park, Victoria Embankment and Highfields Park primarily provide access to the west and south parts of the city

and these are scored as having higher quality and value. Windmill Green and Arboretum are situated further east and provide access to that part of the city and Carlton and Gedling outside the NCC boundary. These sites have lower quality and value scores. However, the majority of the city in the south east is also within the access buffer to Victoria Embankment as well. Parts of Sherwood, Berridge, Basford and Bestwood are only within the access buffer of lower quality and value destination Parks and Gardens.

**9.33** Access to Destination Parks and Gardens is lacking in the north of the city. The northern part of Bilborough, Aspley and Basford, most of Bestwood and the southern parts of Bulwell Forest and Bulwell are within the access buffers for either Wollaton Park or Arboretum only, both of which only offer access during opening hours. The northern parts of Bulwell Forest and Bulwell are not within the access buffer of any Destination Parks and Gardens.

**9.34** Nottingham Castle has not been audited as it is paid for attraction. However, the 5km access buffer to this space overlaps entirely with the buffers for other spaces.

### City Parks and Gardens

**9.35** The City Parks and Gardens within Nottingham are shown in **Figure 9.4** with a 1km access buffer. Provision of these spaces is greatest in the north of the city, with the majority of Bulwell, Bulwell Forest, Clifton East, Bestwood, Basford and Aspley within the 1km buffer of a City Park and Garden. The quality and value of these sites vary: Bestwood and Aspley predominantly have access to lower quality and value spaces.

**9.36** In the west of the city, including most of Wollaton West and the south part of Bilborough, there is access to City Parks and Gardens, but the majority of the ward is only within the 1km buffer of a City Park and Garden with opening hours restricting access.

**9.37** There is a deficiency in City Parks and Gardens in Dales, Mapperley, Leen Valley, Radford, Wollaton West, Clifton West and Clifton East where all, or most of the ward is outside the 1km buffer of a City Park and Garden. In particular, the southern parts of Clifton east and Clifton West are the areas in Nottingham furthest from a City Park and Garden. There is limited access to city Parks and Gardens in a linear belt located west of the city centre, which incorporates part of Castle, Radford and Leen Valley wards.

**9.38** Access to Neighbourhood Parks and Gardens in Nottingham is widespread, as illustrated in **Figure 9.5**. However, there are notable deficiencies in Dales ward, and the southern part of Lenton and Wollaton East. These areas fall outside the 800m buffer for the Neighbourhood Parks and Gardens. It should be noted that population density in the southern part of Lenton and Wollaton East is low, with land use mainly comprising industrial buildings.

**9.39** In addition, Wollaton West is primarily within the access buffer of Wollaton Park which is restricted by opening hours. Accessibility in Aspley and Bilborough is good, although this is predominantly to Parks and Gardens that have lower quality and/or value scores.

### Local Parks and Gardens

**9.40** **Figure 9.6** highlights the quality, value and accessibility of Local Parks and Gardens in Nottingham. This figure shows a similar pattern to the that of the neighbourhood hierarchy spaces. There is near universal access to Local Parks and Gardens in the northern half of the city, with almost all areas within the 600m access buffer. An exception to this is for the properties immediately south of Highbury Hospital, where there is a gap in provision.

**9.41** The gaps in provision generally follow the patterns noted above, with deficiency in:

- North west of the city centre there is no provision around Castle Boulevard and only de facto access or no access between Castle Boulevard and Maid Marian Way;
- There is very limited provision for Parks and Gardens in Dales and Meadows wards. Whilst large sections of this ward are undeveloped, there are a significant number of properties in the north of the ward with no access to Local Parks and Gardens;
- The southern part of Lenton and Wollaton East has very limited access to Parks and Gardens, although the majority of this land is not residential. In Wollaton West provision is mostly restricted by opening hours; and
- Access to Parks and Gardens is patchy in Clifton; properties in the south east corner of the village are outside the buffer.

**9.42** In general, the sites in the north of the city have lower quality and value scores. In particular, this affects Bilborough, Aspley and parts of Bestwood and Bulwell wards.

Figure 9.2: Application of quality and value standards

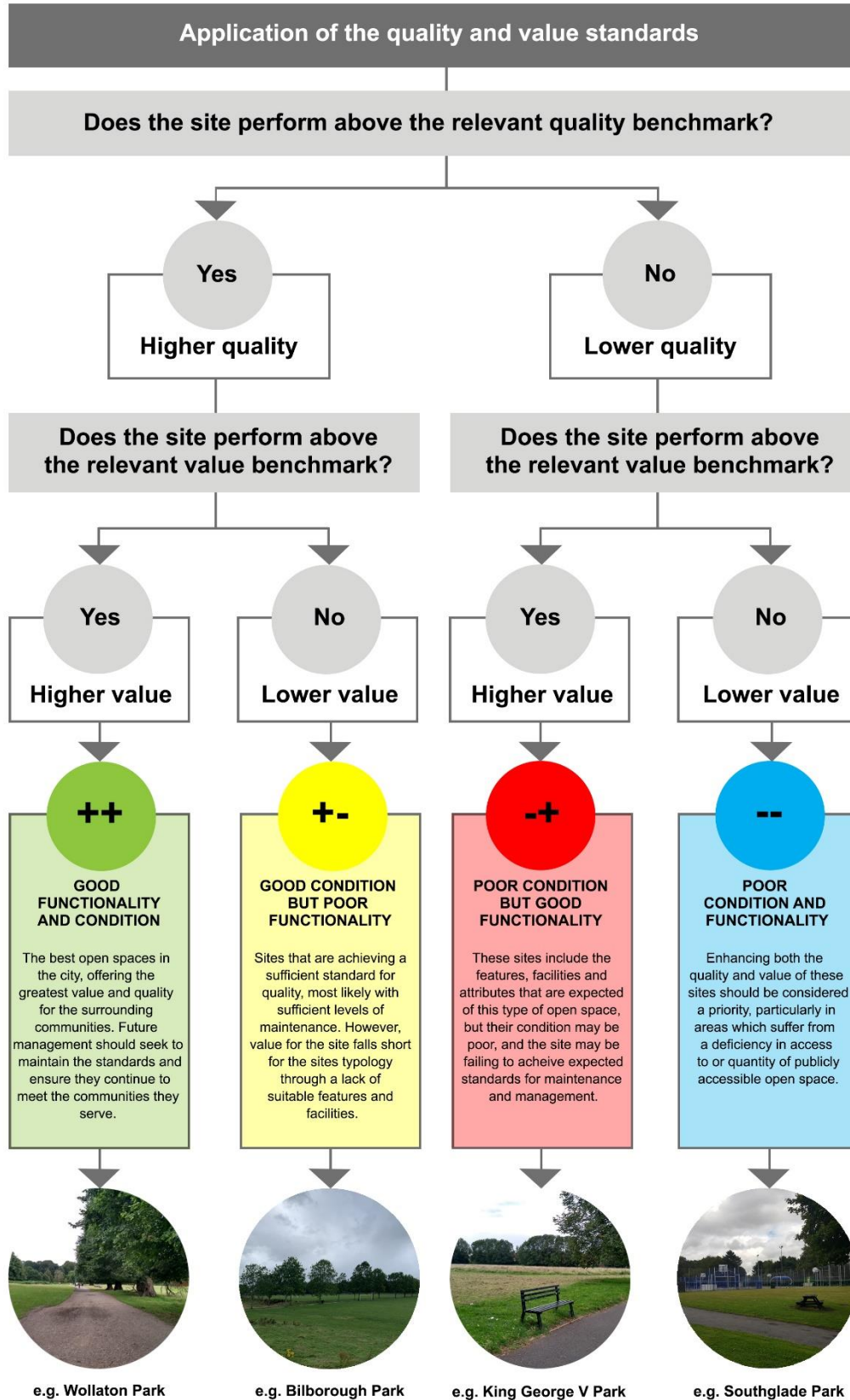
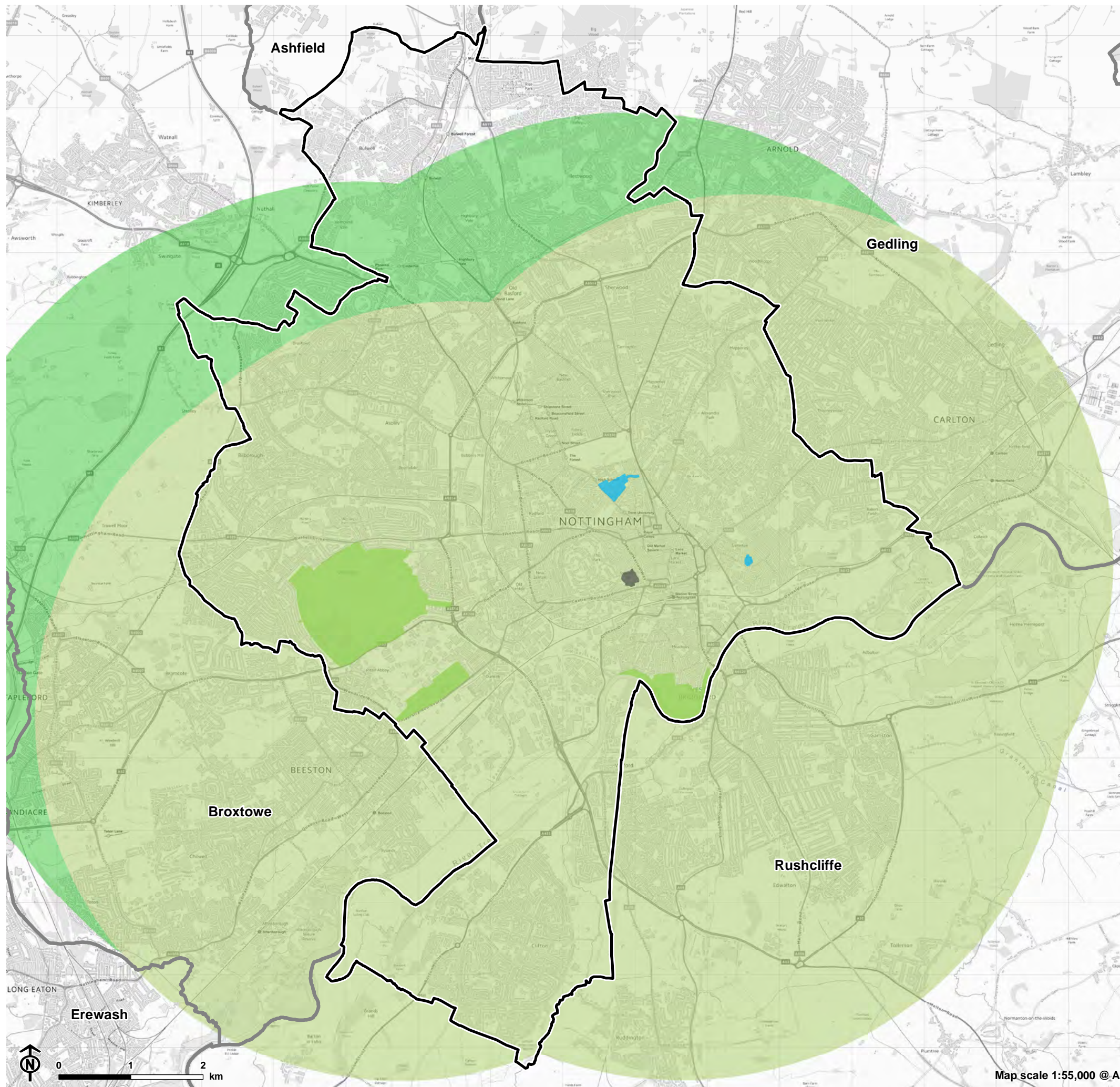


Figure 9.3: Destination Parks and Gardens: Quality, Value, and Accessibility



- Nottingham City
- Neighbouring local authority
- Open space quality and value**
  - Higher quality, higher value
  - Higher quality, lower value
  - Lower quality, higher value
  - Lower quality, lower value
  - Not audited

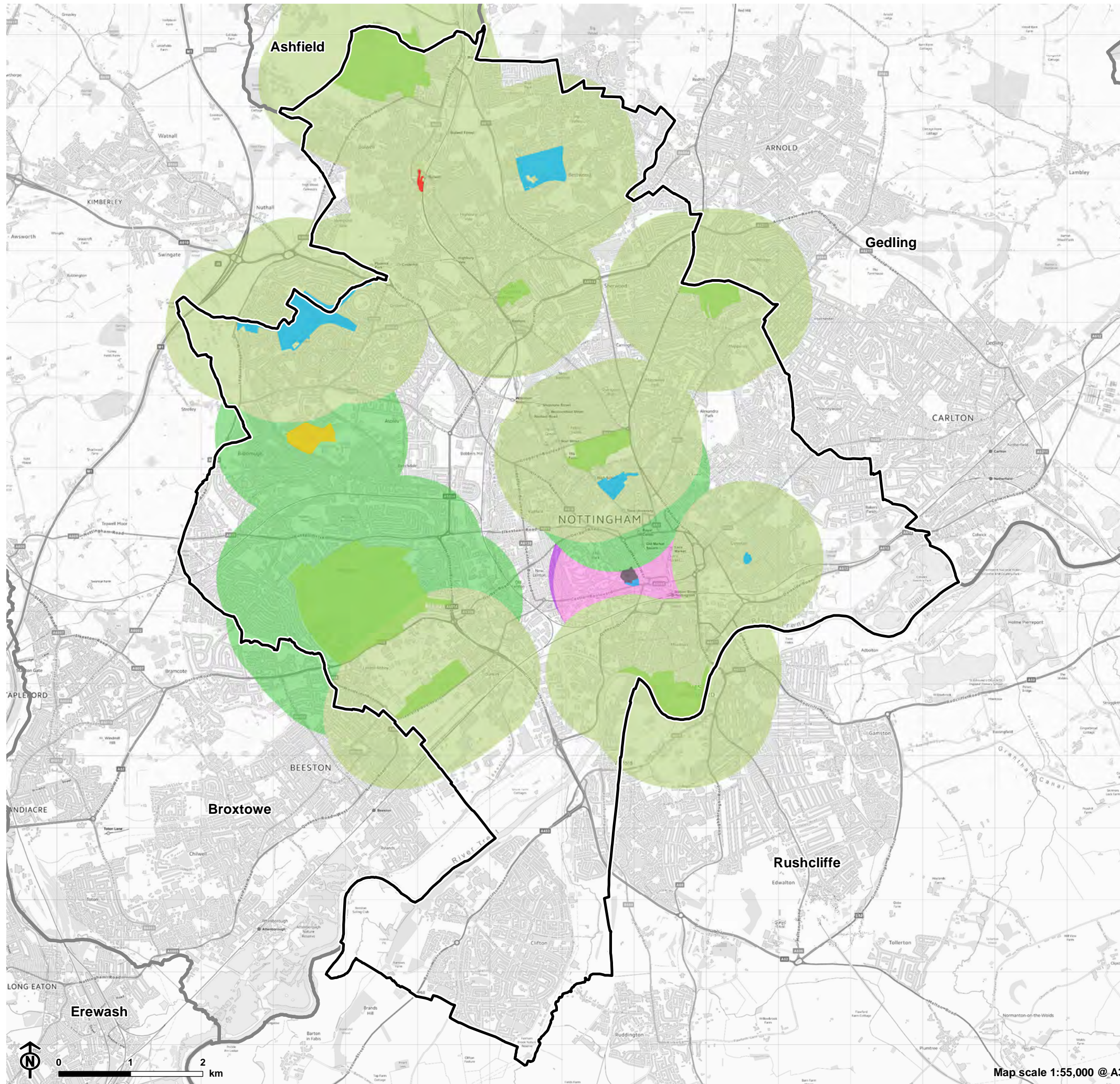
- 5km access buffer (representing 60 minutes pedestrian walking time)**
  - Freely accessible to public
  - Freely accessible to public: opening hours



Map scale 1:55,000 @ A3



Figure 9.4: City Parks and Gardens: Quality, Value, and Accessibility



- Nottingham City
- Neighbouring local authority

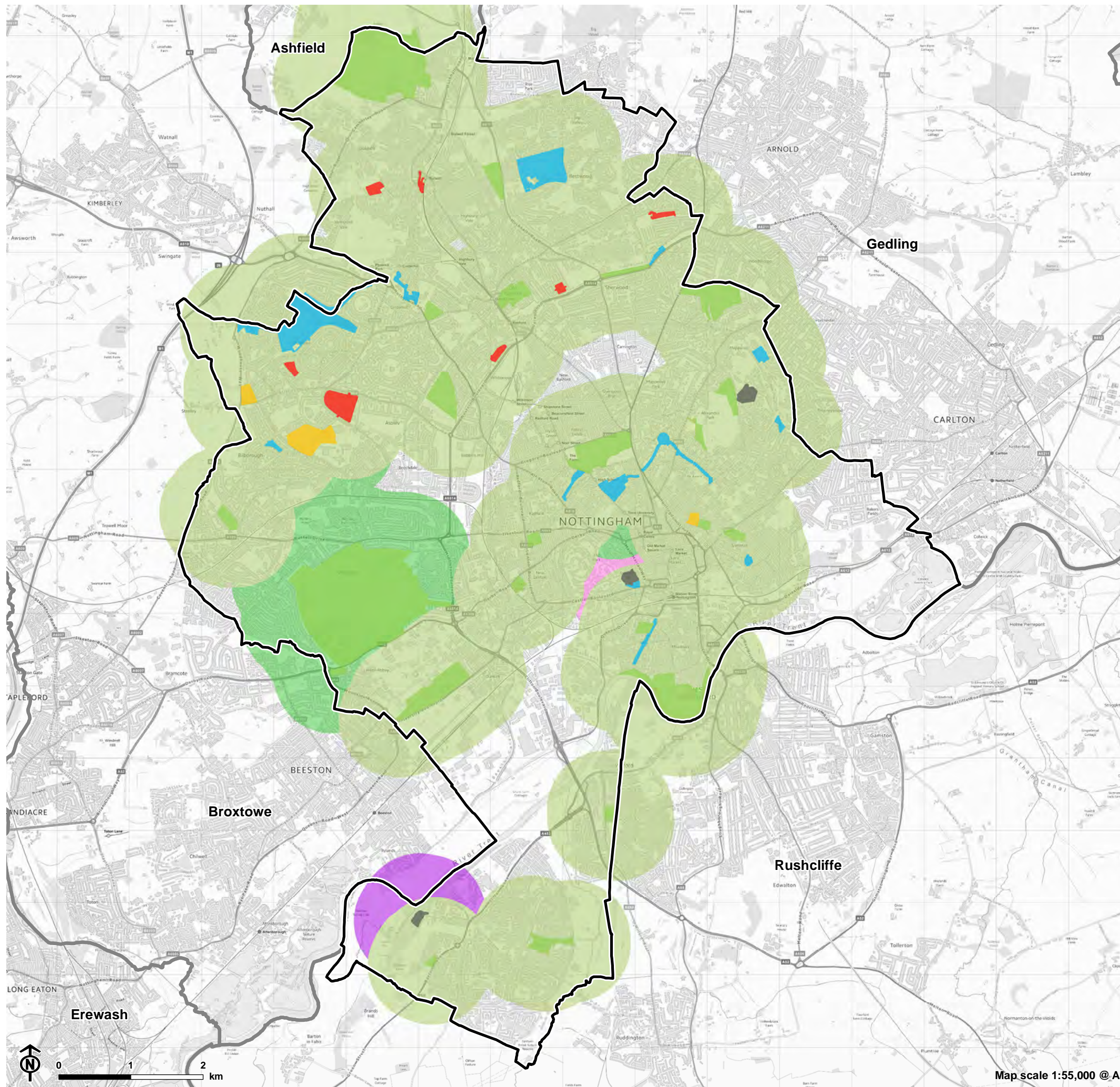
**Open space quality and value**

- Higher quality, higher value
- Higher quality, lower value
- Lower quality, higher value
- Lower quality, lower value
- Not audited

**1km access buffer (representing 15 minutes pedestrian walking time)**

- Freely accessible to public
- Freely accessible to public: opening hours
- Freely accessible to public: unofficial/de facto
- No public access

Figure 9.5: Neighbourhood Parks and Gardens: Quality, Value and Accessibility



- Nottingham City
- Neighbouring local authority

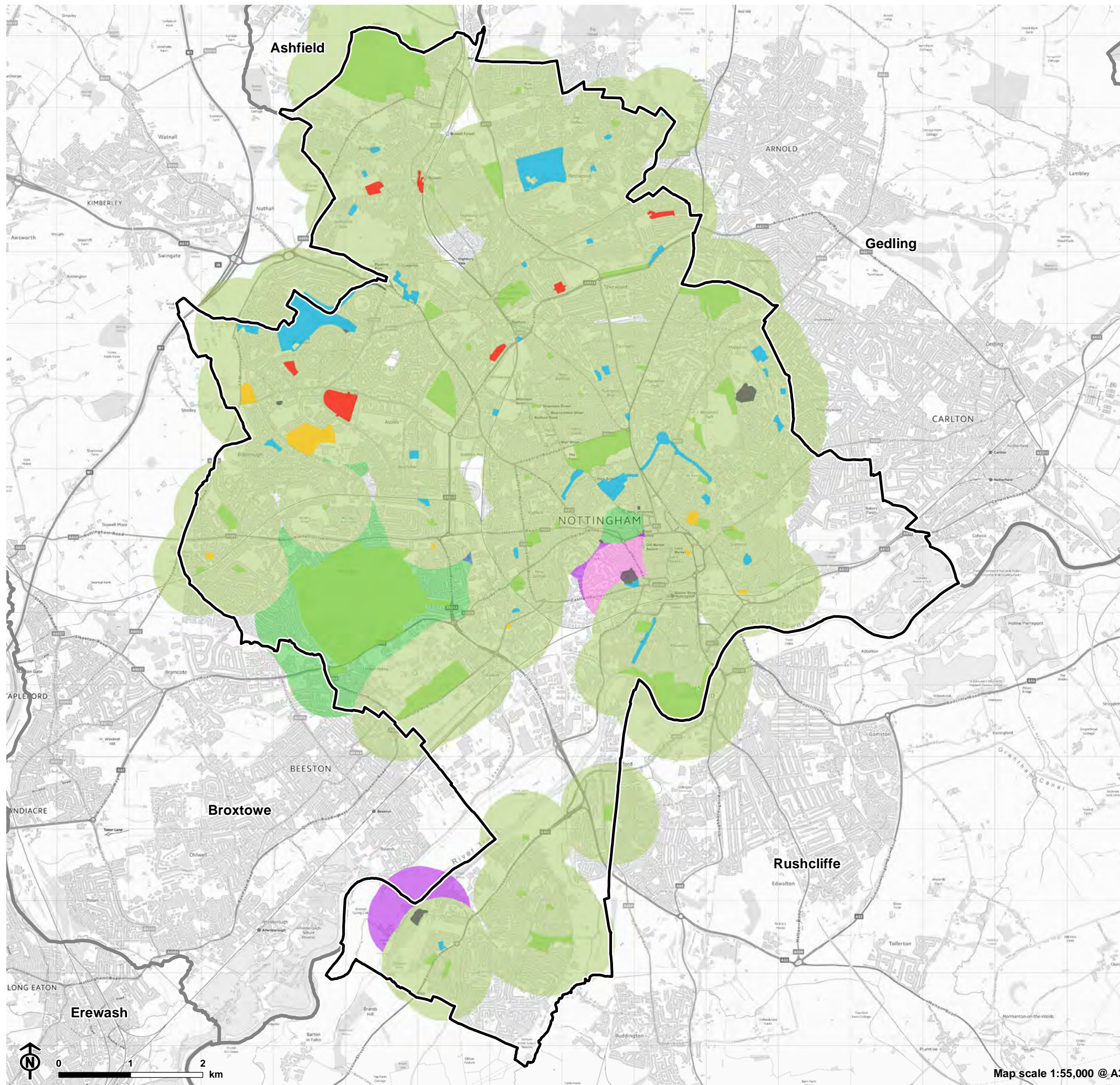
**Open space quality and value**

- Higher quality, higher value
- Higher quality, lower value
- Lower quality, higher value
- Lower quality, lower value
- Not audited

**800m access buffer (representing 10 minutes pedestrian walking time)**

- Freely accessible to public
- Freely accessible to public: opening hours
- Freely accessible to public: unofficial/de facto
- No public access

Figure 9.6: Local Parks and Gardens: Quality, Value, and Accessibility



## Natural and Semi Natural

### Destination Natural and Semi Natural

**9.43** There are no Destination Natural and Semi Natural sites in Nottingham.

### City Natural and Semi Natural

**9.44** There are a number of City Natural and Semi Natural green spaces in Nottingham, as shown on **Figure 9.7**. The majority of the city has access to the largest Natural and Semi Natural green spaces, although there are some gaps in access within Wollaton West, Bilborough and Mapperley wards. There are also areas within Leen Valley ward that although are within the buffer for City Natural and Semi Natural sites, these sites have no public access. Although there are a number of sites with high quality and high value, there are also many which have lower quality and access, particularly the River Leen sites. There is a cluster of higher quality, lower value sites in the south along the Beeston Canal.

### Neighbourhood Natural and Semi Natural

**9.45** There are 19 Neighbourhood Natural and Semi Natural green spaces in Nottingham, as shown on **Figure 9.8**. The majority of the city has access to Neighbourhood Natural and Semi Natural green space, with the exception of a small area of Berridge and Sherwood wards in the centre. The majority of the sites are high quality and high value, such as Silverdale Open Space. There are five sites which are low quality and low value, including Stanton Tip.

### Local Natural and Semi Natural

**9.46** The whole of Nottingham city has access to Local Natural and Semi Natural green spaces, as shown in **Figure 9.9**. The sites are evenly spread across the city. There are 10 sites with high quality and high value such as Snape Wood. There are equal numbers of sites with high quality and low value, and low quality and high value. The 12 sites with low quality and low value tend to be clustered in the east and around Basford ward.

## Amenity Green Space

**9.47** Although there are a number of Amenity Green Spaces in Nottingham City, only 10 were surveyed, as shown in **Figure 9.10**. This results in variable access to Amenity Green Spaces, with all wards experiencing a deficiency in access. Surveyed Amenity Green Spaces are clustered in the north and centre, and no access in southern wards including Clifton East, Clifton West, Lenton and Wollaton East and Meadows. In addition, two of the sites surveyed had no public access. Four sites were found to have high quality and high value,

including Highbury Vale Park, while four sites were found to have low quality and low value, including Britannia Avenue Open Space.

## Barriers to access

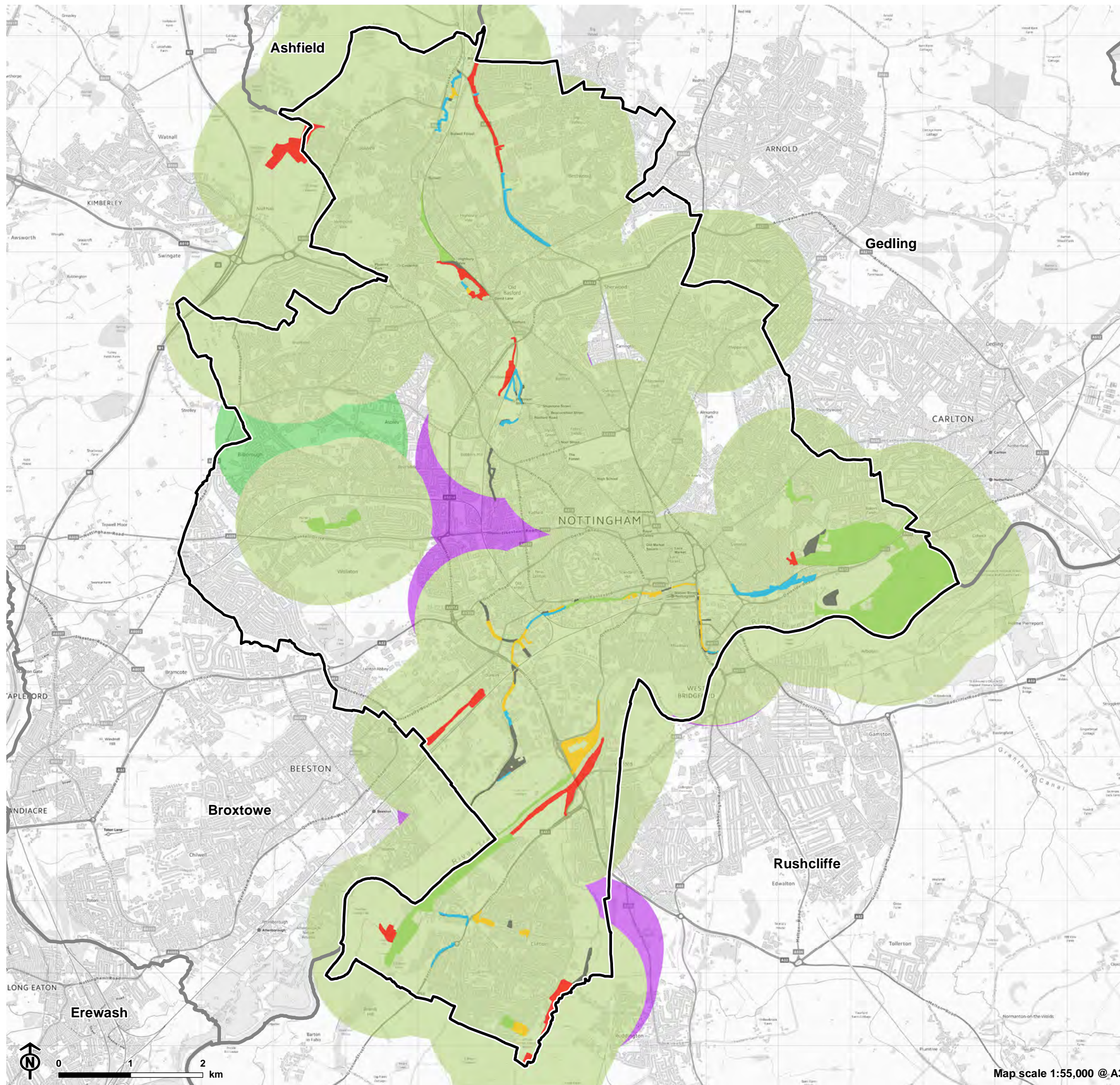
**9.48** There are a range of barriers to access across the city, illustrated on **Figure 9.11**. These include large roads, railway lines, canals and rivers. The A roads and railway generally run north to south and east to west, while the watercourses follow the railway line north-south and create a barrier between Clifton West and Clifton East in the south and the rest of the city. Rivers and canals may improve access to open spaces in some locations.

## Combined deficiencies

**9.49** **Figure 9.12** illustrates the combined deficiencies in publicly accessible open space within Nottingham. This figure highlights which areas are deficient in different hierarchy levels of open space. These levels include: Destination Spaces, City Spaces, Neighbourhood Spaces, Local Spaces and Amenity Green Spaces. All of Nottingham has access to at least two levels within the hierarchy and the majority of the city is deficient to just one level of the hierarchy. There are clusters within the city that are deficient in two or more hierarchy levels, and these are generally located in the northern half of the city. This is most prominent in the west of the city where large parts of the city in Wollaton West are deficient in access to three levels of the hierarchy. This highlights the reliance on Wollaton Park in this part of the city. There are also significant deficiencies in Castle and Meadows, and the north of Bulwell and Bulwell Forest. There are very few parts of the city with access to all levels of the hierarchy. **Figures 9.13 - 9.16** illustrate the percentage of each ward that include a deficiency to each of the four hierarchies.

**9.50** Potential priority locations for addressing significant barriers to access are discussed in **Chapter 10**.

Figure 9.7: City Natural and Semi Natural Green Space: Quality, Value and Accessibility



- Nottingham City
- Neighbouring local authority

**Open space quality and value**

- Higher quality, higher value
- Higher quality, lower value
- Lower quality, higher value
- Lower quality, lower value
- Not audited

**1km access buffer (representing 15 minutes pedestrian walking time)**

- Freely accessible to public
- Freely accessible to public: opening hours
- No public access

Figure 9.8: Neighbourhood Natural and Semi Natural Green Space: Quality, Value and Accessibility

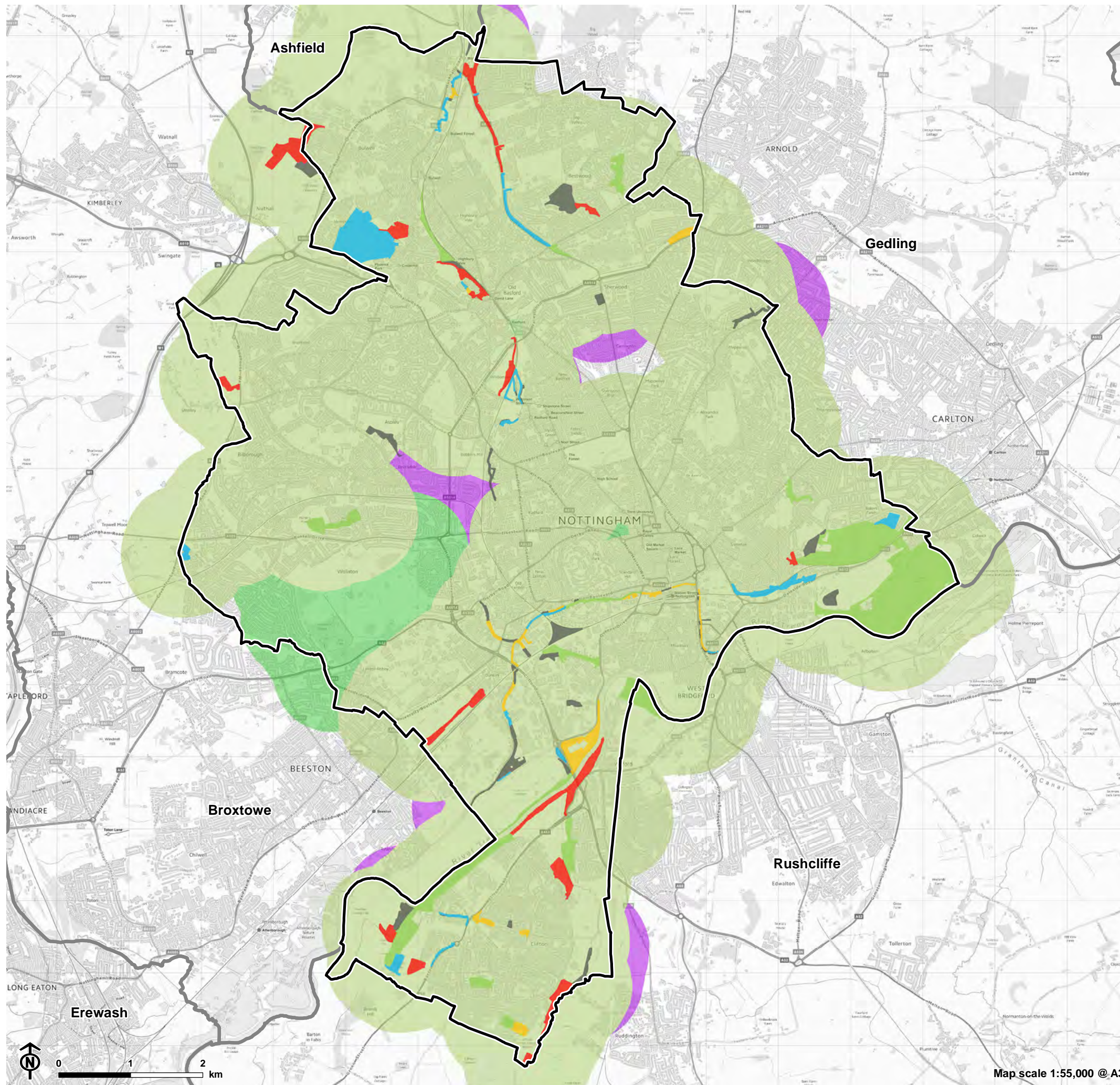
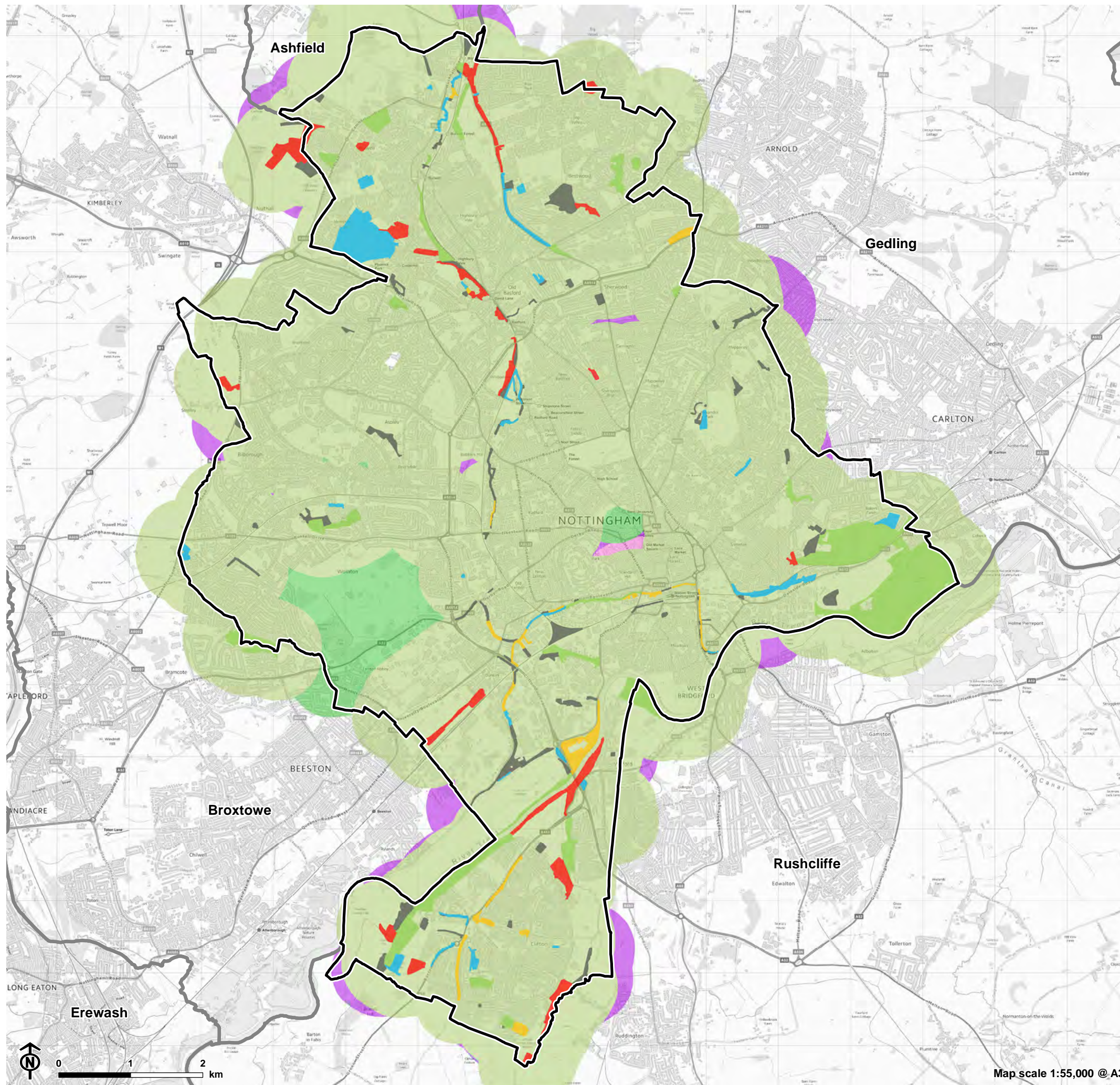
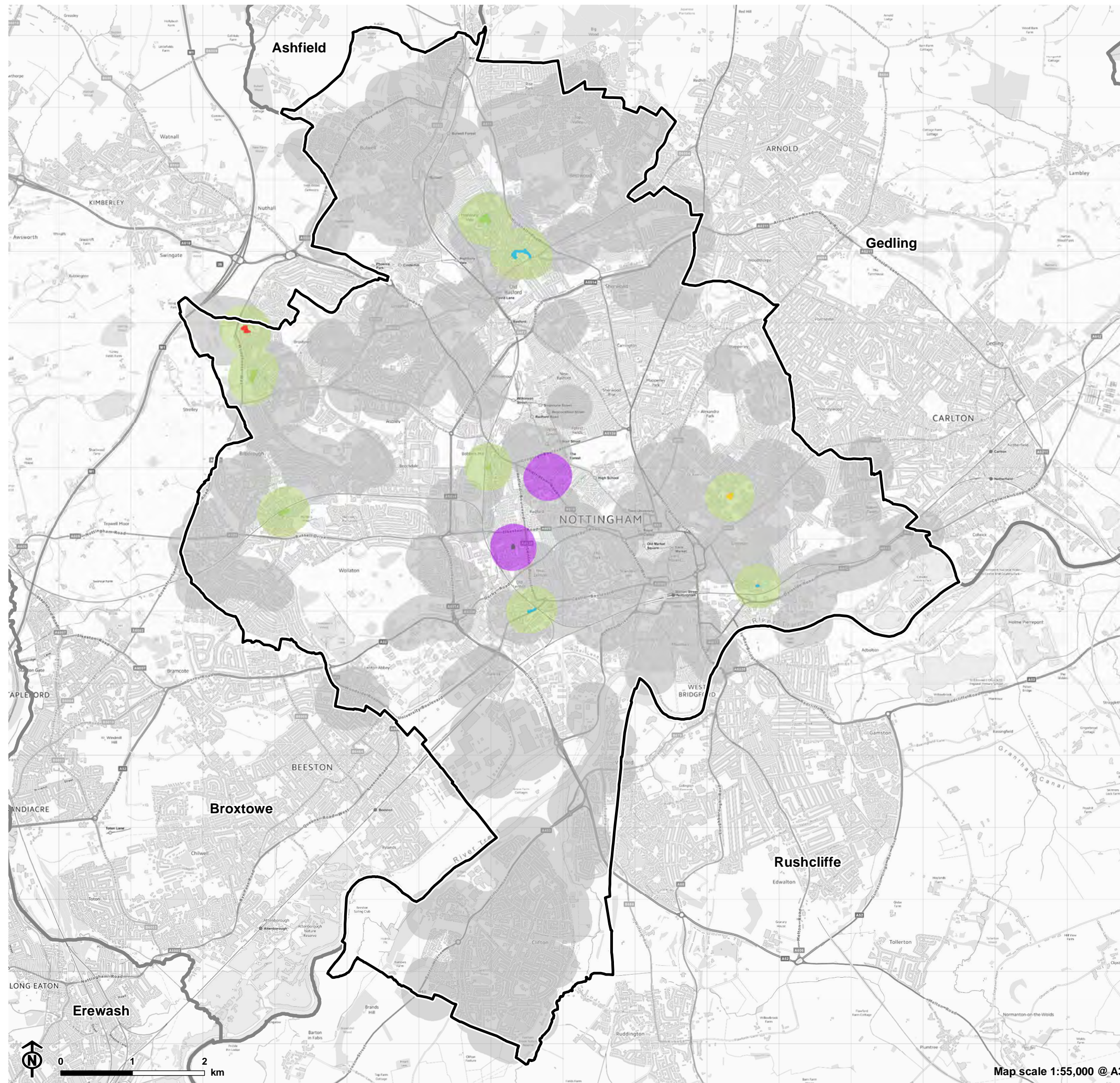


Figure 9.9: Local Natural and Semi Natural Green Space: Quality, Value and Accessibility



- Nottingham City
- Neighbouring local authority
- Local Natural and Semi Natural Green Space**
- Open space quality and value**
- Higher quality, higher value
- Higher quality, lower value
- Lower quality, higher value
- Lower quality, lower value
- Not audited
- 600m access buffer (representing 8 minutes pedestrian walking time)**
- Freely accessible to public
- Freely accessible to public: opening hours
- Freely accessible to public: unofficial/de facto
- Restricted access: other
- No public access

Figure 9.10: Amenity Green Space: Quality, Value, and Accessibility



- Nottingham City
- Neighbouring local authority

**Open space quality and value**

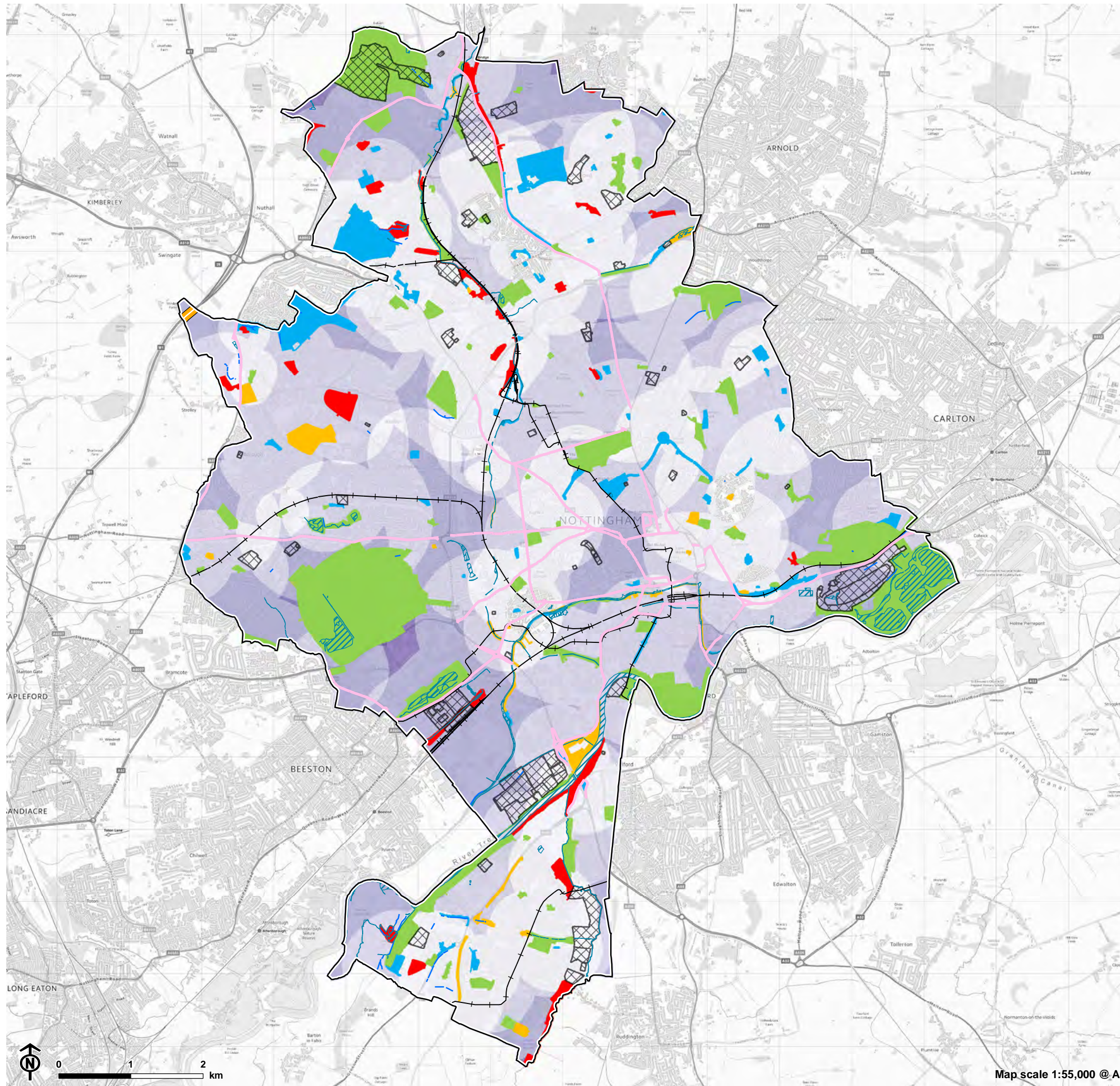
- Higher quality, higher value
- Higher quality, lower value
- Lower quality, higher value
- Lower quality, lower value
- Not audited

**300m access buffer (representing 4 minutes pedestrian walking time)**

- Freely accessible to public
- No public access
- No access information



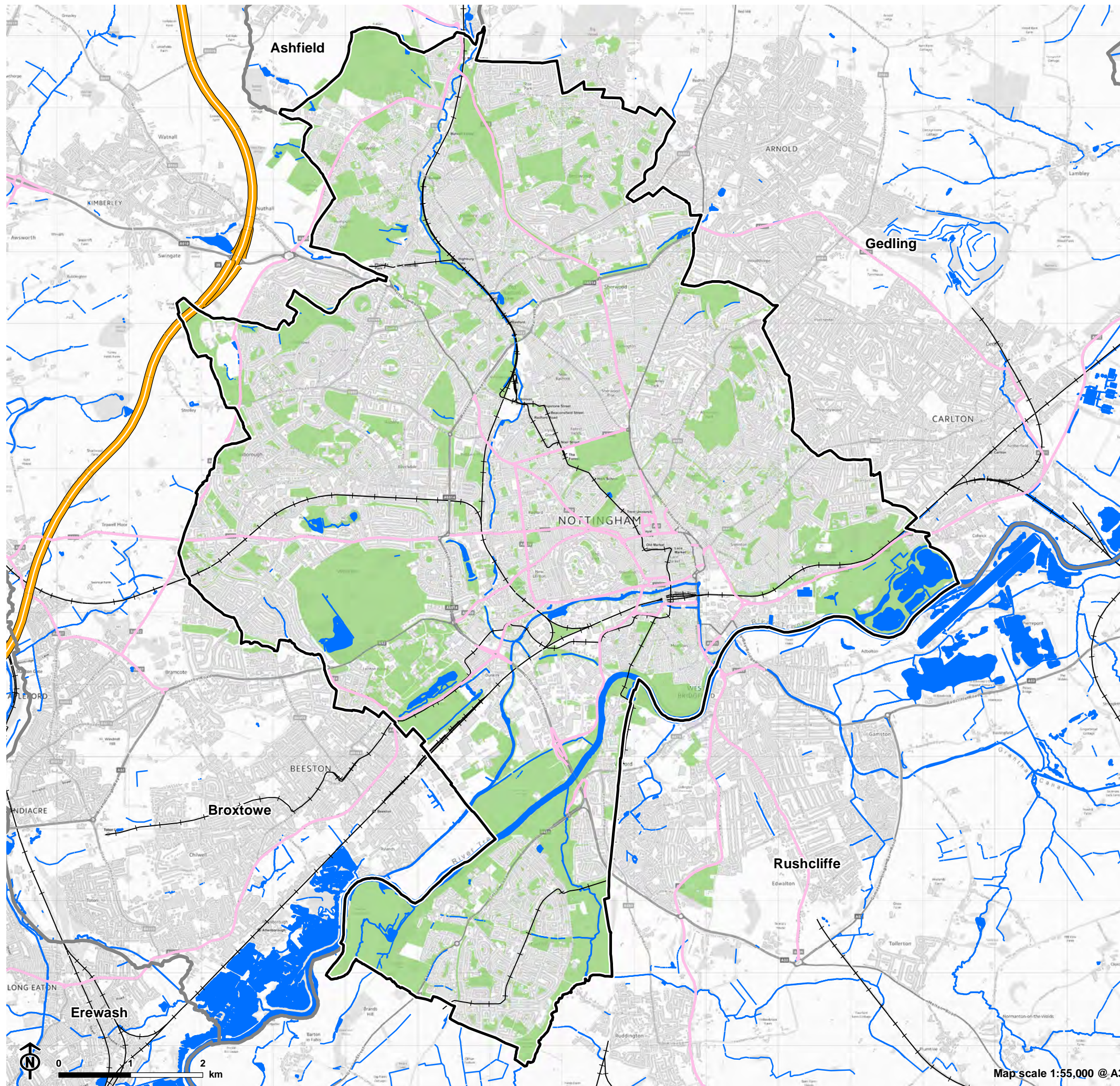
Figure 9.11: Combined Deficiency and Barriers to Open Space



- Nottingham City
- Neighbouring local authority
- Publicly accessible outdoor sports facility
- Public open space**
- Higher quality, higher value
- Higher quality, lower value
- Lower quality, higher value
- Lower quality, lower value
- Not audited
- Combined deficiency**
- Deficient in access to 1 level of the hierarchy
- Deficient in access to 2 levels of the hierarchy
- Deficient in access to 3 levels of the hierarchy
- Deficient in access to 4 levels of the hierarchy
- Potential barrier**
- Motorway
- A road
- Railway Track
- Waterbody or watercourse

Map scale 1:55,000 @ A3

Figure 9.12: Barriers to Open Space



- Nottingham City
- Neighbouring local authority
- Open space
- Potential barrier**
  - Motorway
  - A road
  - Railway Track
  - Waterbody or watercourse

Figure 9.13: Percentage of ward that include a deficiency of Destination sites

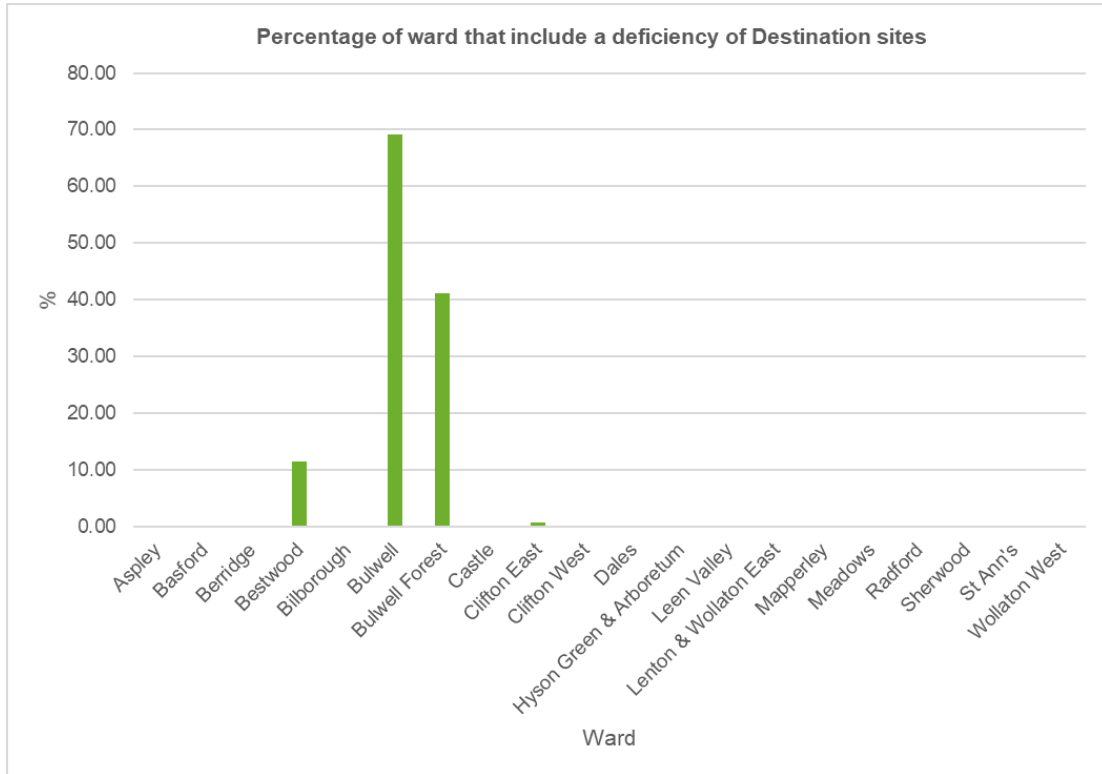
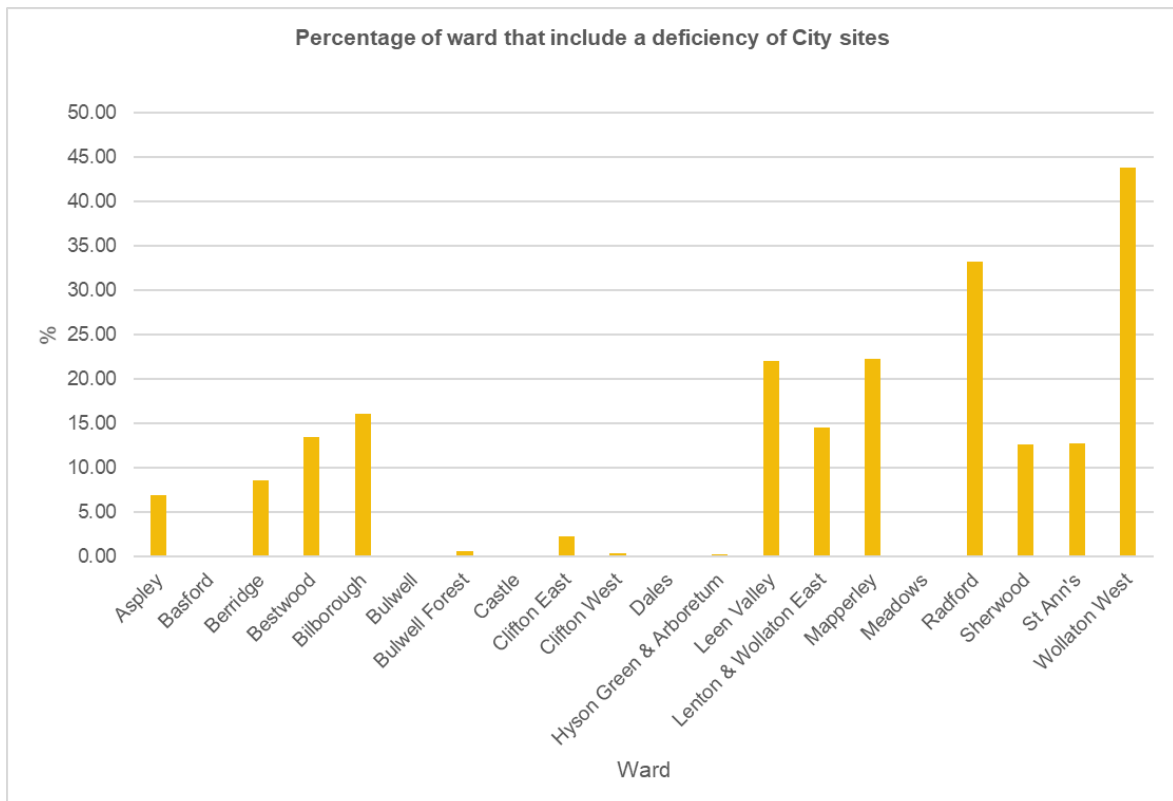


Figure 9.14: Percentage of ward that include a deficiency of City sites

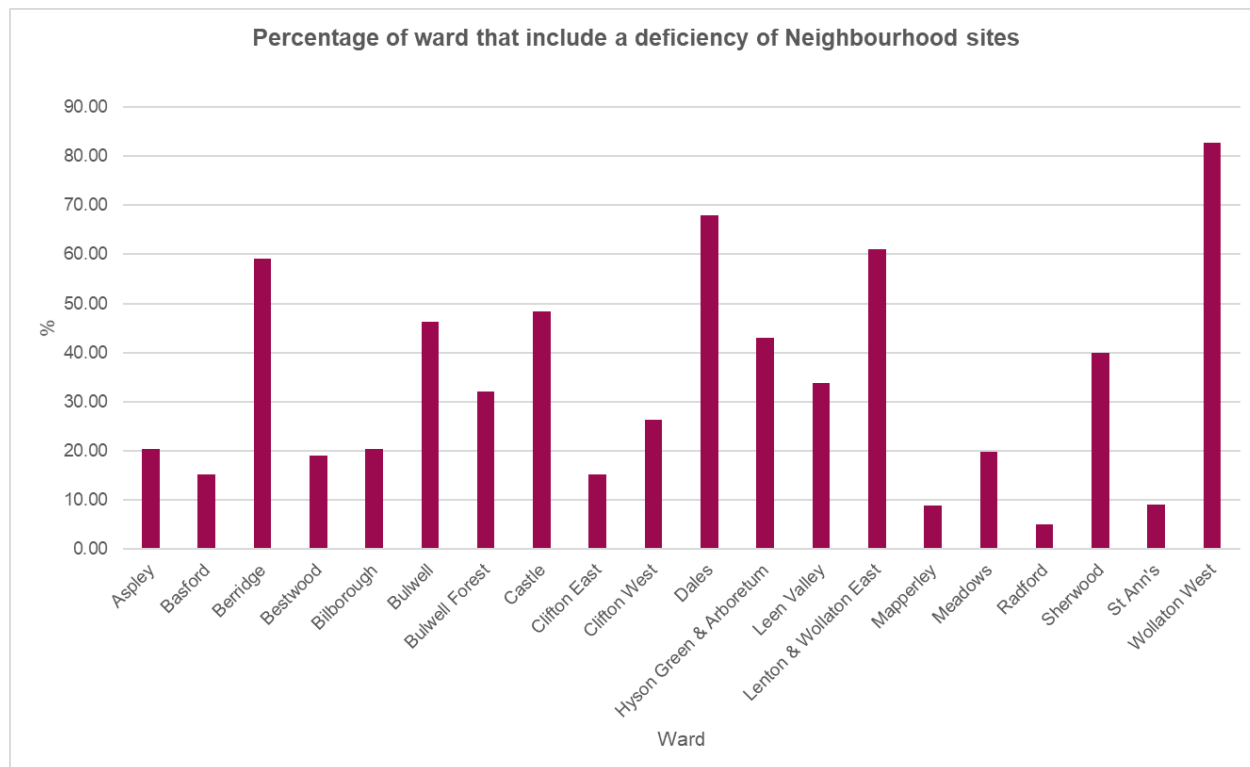


**Chapter 9**

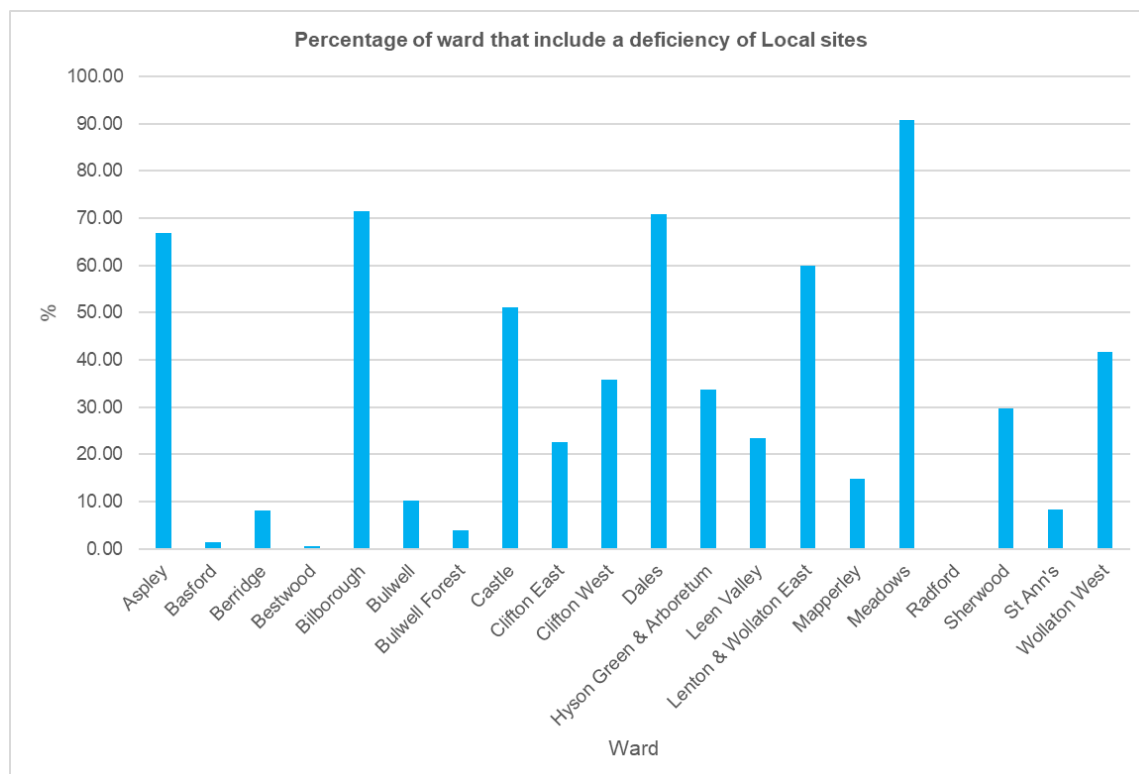
Development and application of proposed open space and play standards

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**Figure 9.15: Percentage of ward that include a deficiency of Neighbourhood sites**



**Figure 9.16: Percentage of ward that include a deficiency of Local sites**



### Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms

**9.51** Nottingham city has a good number of Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms, and 39 were surveyed, as shown in **Figure 9.13**. There is generally good access to Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms throughout the city, although there is some deficiency in Bestwood in the north-east and Lenton and Wollaton East in the west. The majority of the Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms have access restricted to members or tenants. High quality and high value Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms are spread across Nottingham city, and Merevale Allotments and St Ann's Allotments, Gorseley Close were found to have low quality and high value. 20 Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms were found to have low quality and low value, with a cluster of these in Dales and to the west of Nottingham city centre.

### Cemeteries, Churches and Disused Churchyards

**9.52** The distribution of Cemeteries, Churches and Disused Churchyards is shown in **Figure 9.14**. There is a fairly even spread of these spaces throughout the city. The quality and value of these sites is mixed, with a similar number of lower quality and value as higher quality and value sites. Most the larger sites in this typology have higher quality and value scores.

### Provision for Children and Young People

#### Destination

**9.53** There are four destination play spaces in Nottingham City. The majority of the city lies within the 60 minutes pedestrian walking time buffer, as highlighted in **Figure 9.15**. The exception to this is in the very north of the city within Bulwell and Bulwell Forest. Woodthorpe Grange Park provides access to large sections of the western half of the city and is scored at high quality low value. In the north east of the city, access is provided by Wollaton Park and Bilborough Park, albeit restricted by opening hours.

#### City

**9.54** As indicated by **Figure 9.16**, more than half of Nottingham City lies within the 15 minutes pedestrian walking buffer of these spaces. However, significant pockets exist within Nottingham City that lie outwith the accessibility buffer, including large areas of Bulwell in the north, Castle and Meadows in the south. There are also additional gaps in provision in Basford and Leen Valley; the north eastern extent of Bulwell Forest and Bestwood and the southern parts of Clifton East and Clifton West. The northern areas of Clifton have access to four city play spaces, all of which have higher quality and value scores. The quality of the spaces across the

Nottingham City varies, with central areas of the city characterised by a number of higher quality, lower value sites.

#### Neighbourhood

**9.55** **Figure 9.17** displays a good coverage of neighbourhood play spaces within Nottingham City. The predominant areas of deficiency lie in Castle, Bestwood and Aspley wards. The northern extent of Sherwood and land lying to the north of Mapperley are characterised by a cluster of sites which are typified by lower quality and value scores. A deficiency in higher quality and value sites is also evident to the east of the city in Aspley.

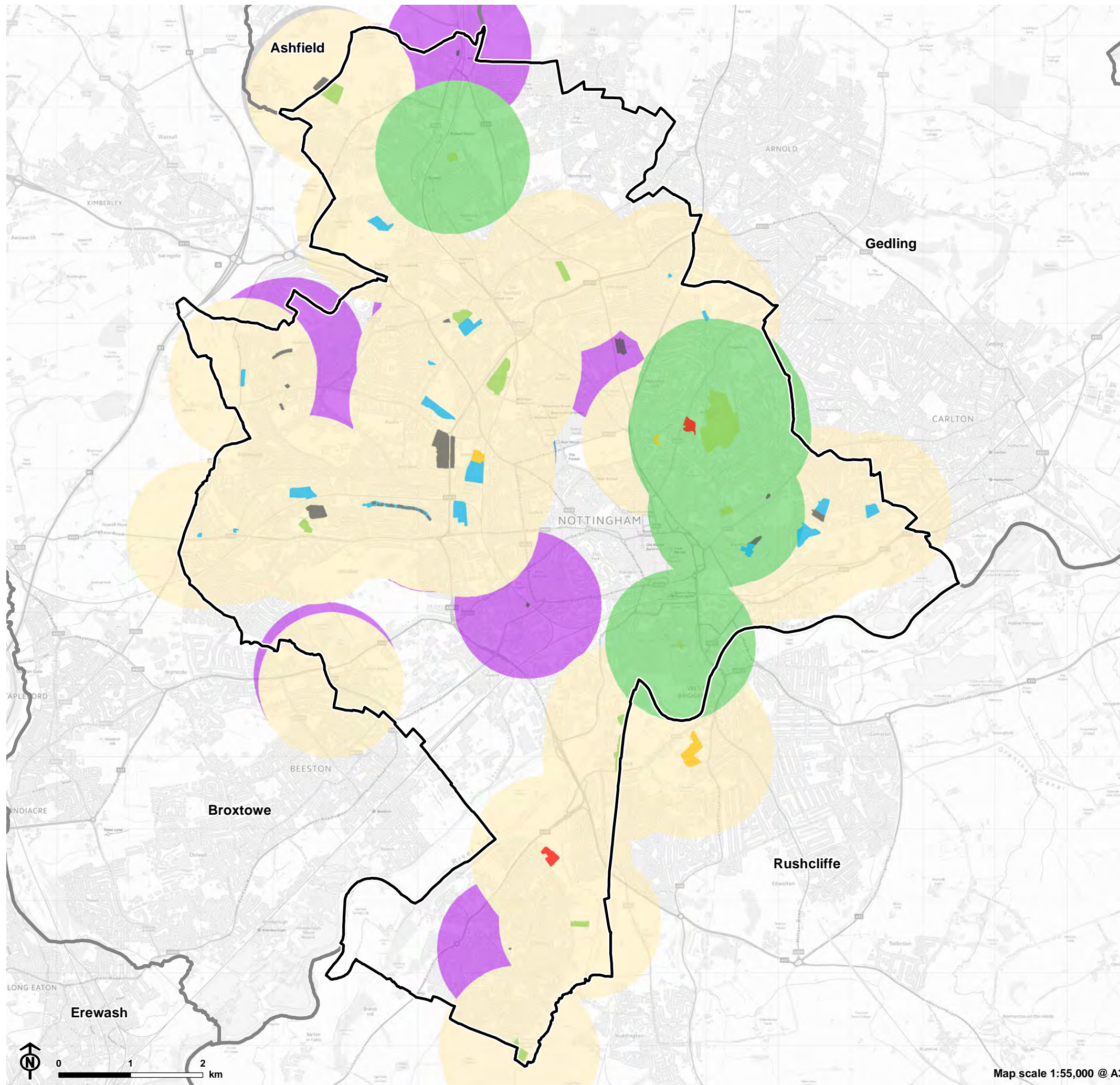
#### Local

**9.56** A number of local playable spaces exist in Nottingham, as illustrated in **Figure 9.18**. However, large sections of the city lie outwith the 300m access buffer to these spaces. The wards with the greatest access to local play spaces are Radford & Hyson and Green & Arboretum, in the centre of the city. However the majority of sites in these areas have lower value scores. Significant gaps in provision exist in all other parts of the city.

#### Other play

**9.57** **Figure 9.19** shows the spread of other play spaces across Nottingham. A wide range of scores exist across the city.

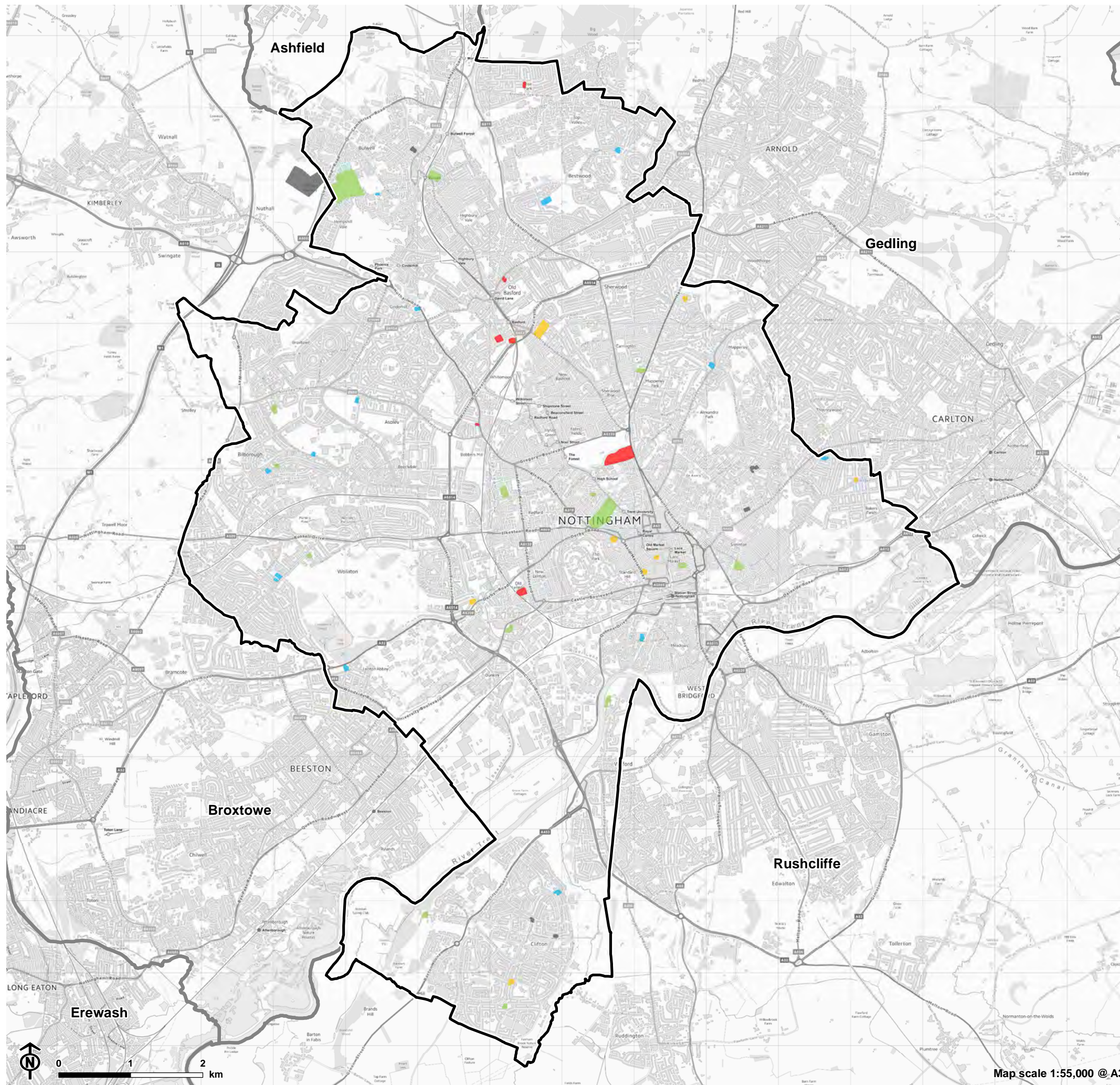
Figure 9.13: Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms: Value and Accessibility



- Nottingham City
- Neighbouring local authority
- Open space quality and value**
- Higher quality, higher value
- Higher quality, lower value
- Lower quality, higher value
- Lower quality, lower value
- Not audited

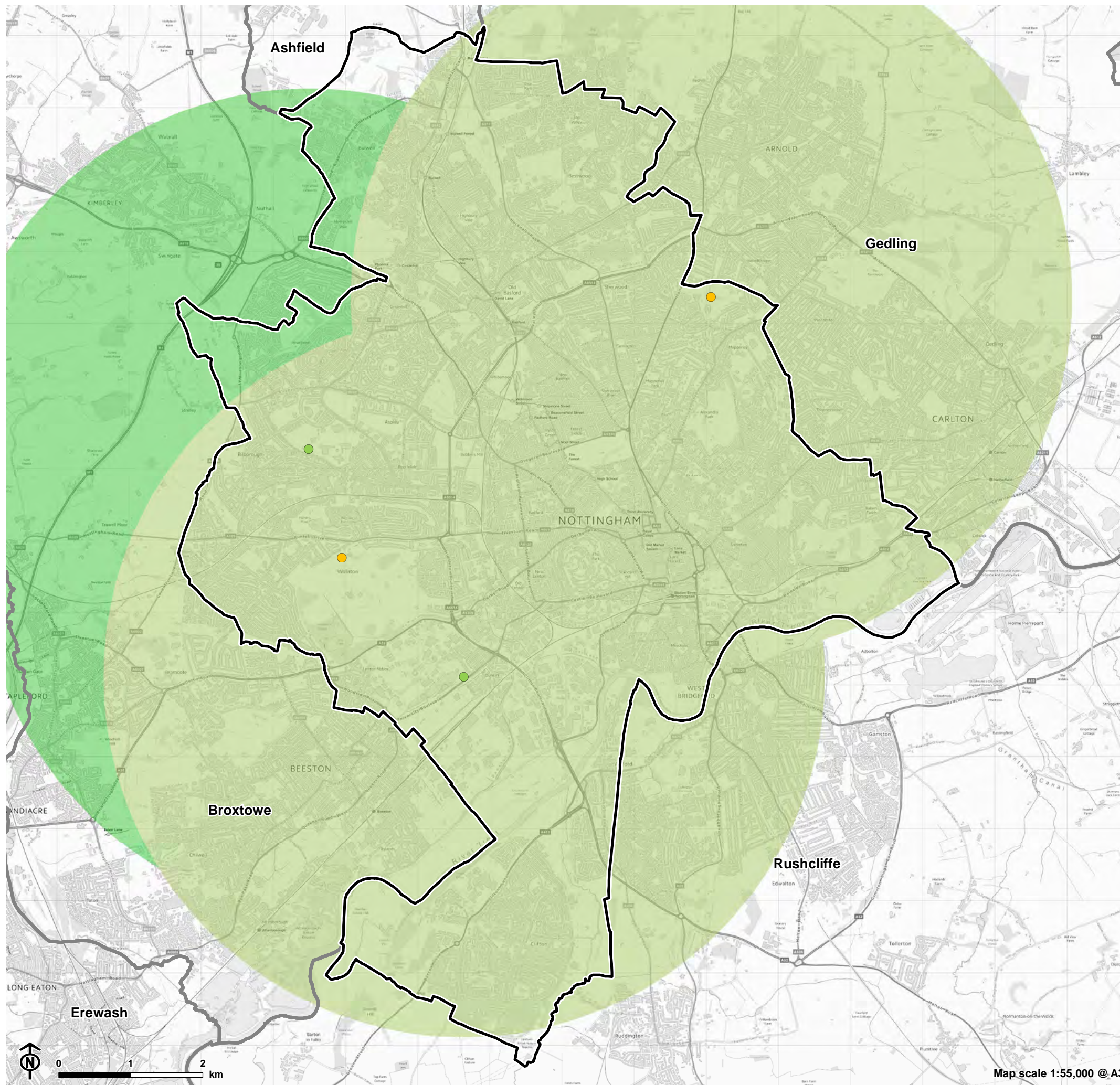
- 1km access buffer (representing 15 minutes pedestrian walking time)**
- Freely accessible to public: opening hours
- Restricted access: members/tenants only
- Restricted access: other
- No public access
- No access information

Figure 9.14: Cemeteries and Churchyards: Quality and Value



- Nottingham City
- Neighbouring local authority
- Open space quality and value**
  - Higher quality, higher value
  - Higher quality, lower value
  - Lower quality, higher value
  - Lower quality, lower value
  - Not audited

Figure 9.15: Destination Play: Quality, Value and Accessibility



- Nottingham City
- Neighbouring local authority

**Play space quality and value**

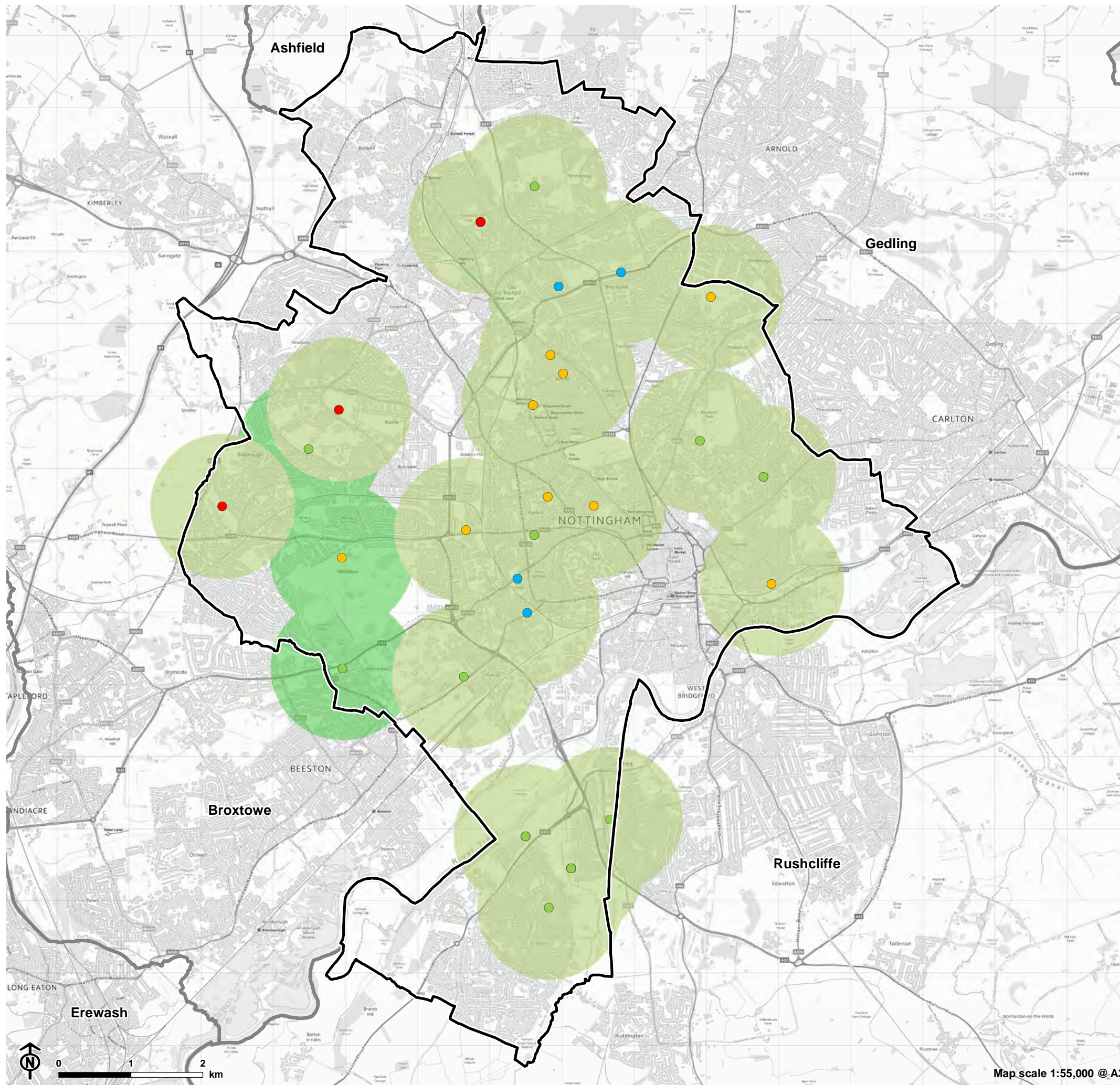
- Higher quality, higher value
- Higher quality, lower value
- Lower quality, higher value
- Lower quality, lower value

**5km access buffer (representing 60 minutes pedestrian walking time)**

- Publicly accessible
- Publicly accessible: opening hours



Figure 9.16: City Play: Quality, Value and Accessibility



- Nottingham City
- Neighbouring local authority

**Play space quality and value**

- Higher quality, higher value
- Higher quality, lower value
- Lower quality, higher value
- Lower quality, lower value

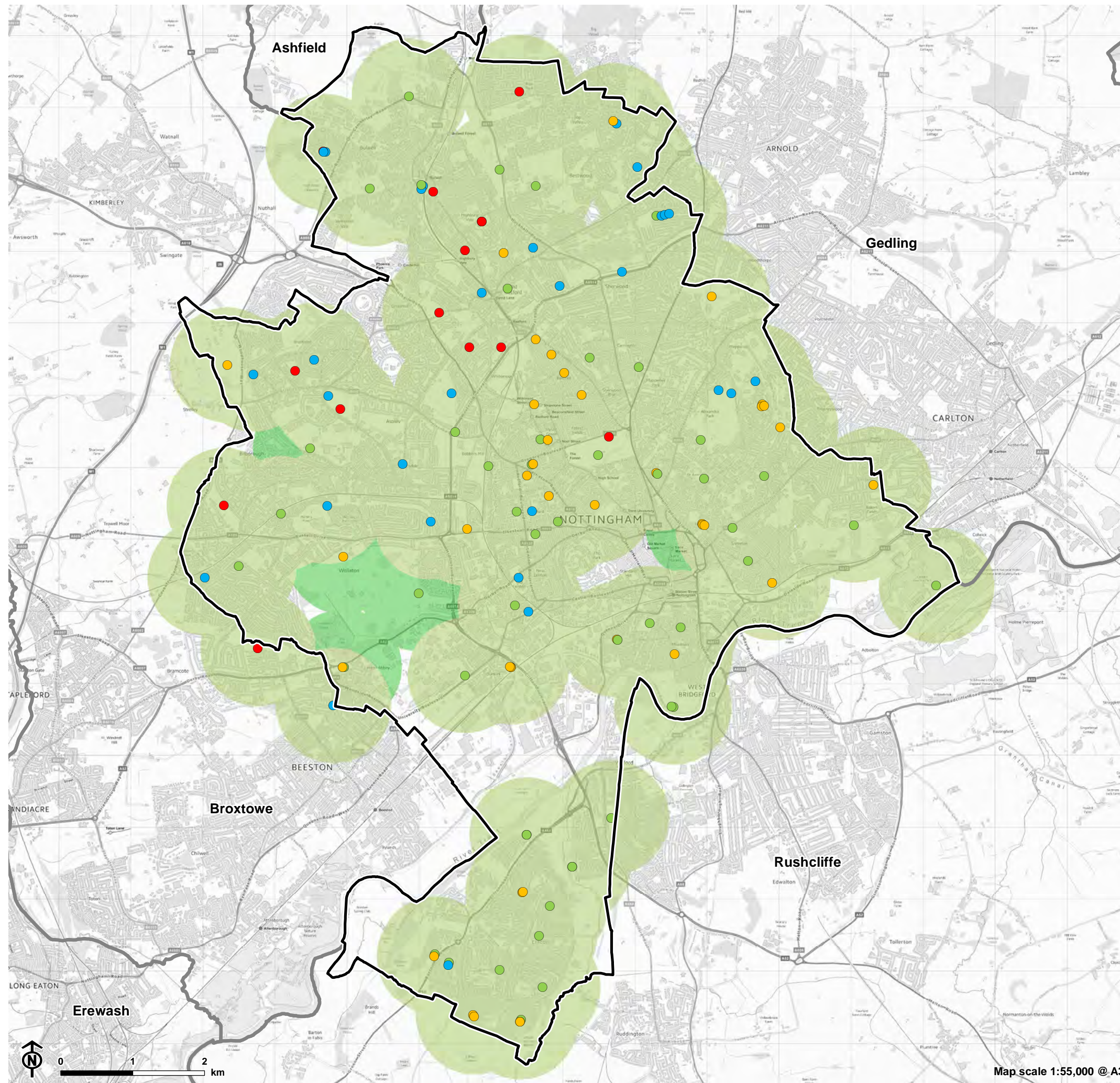
**1km access buffer (representing 15 minutes pedestrian walking time)**

- Publicly accessible
- Publicly accessible: opening hours



Map scale 1:55,000 @ A3

Figure 9.17: Neighbourhood Play: Quality, Value and Accessibility



Nottingham City  
 Neighbouring local authority

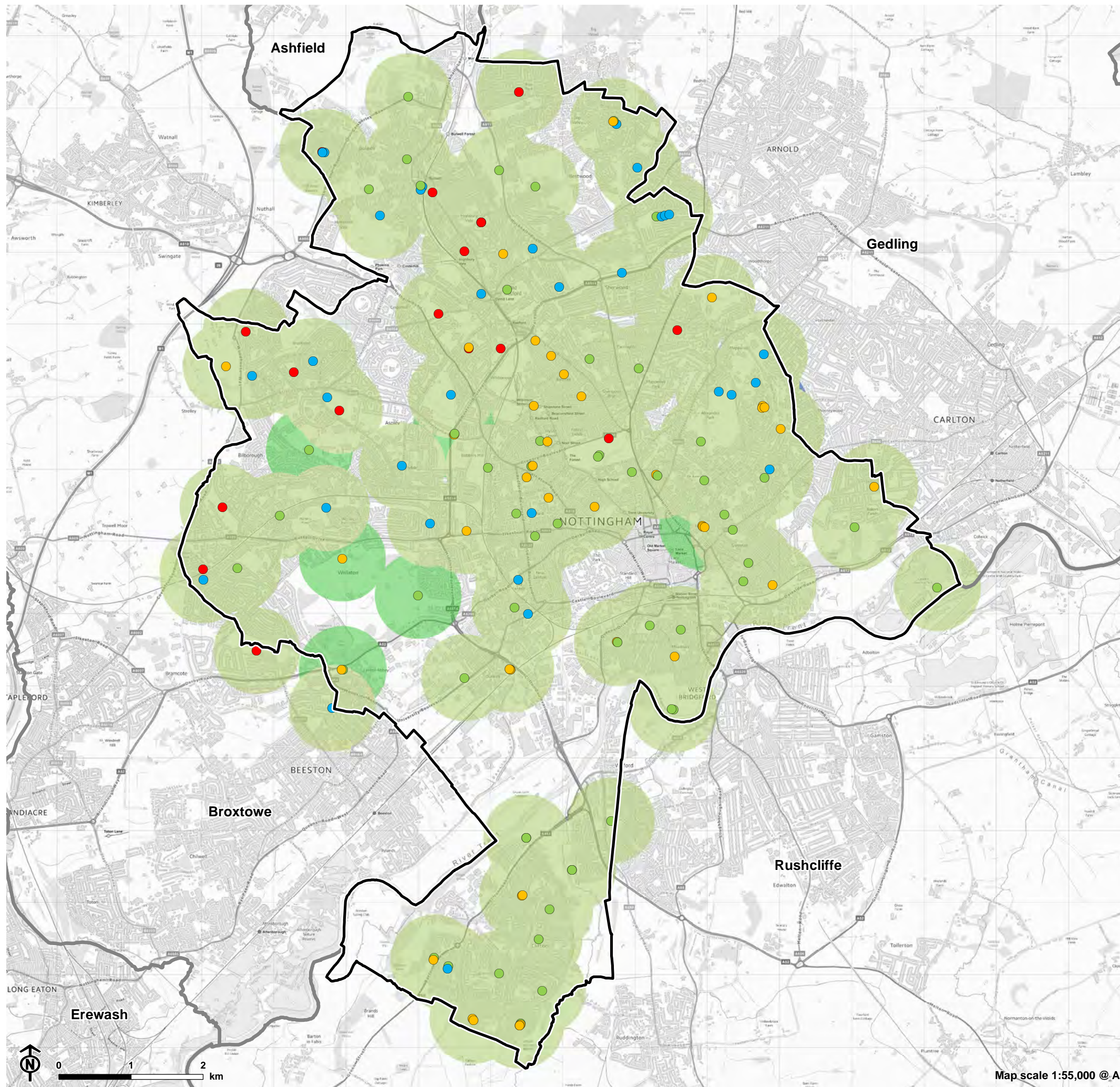
**Play space quality and value**

- Higher quality, higher value
- Higher quality, lower value
- Lower quality, higher value
- Lower quality, lower value

**800m access buffer (representing 11 minutes pedestrian walking time)**

- Publicly accessible
- Publicly accessible: opening hours

Figure 9.18: Local Play: Quality, Value and Accessibility



- Nottingham City
- Neighbouring local authority

**Play space quality and value**

- Higher quality, higher value
- Higher quality, lower value
- Lower quality, higher value
- Lower quality, lower value

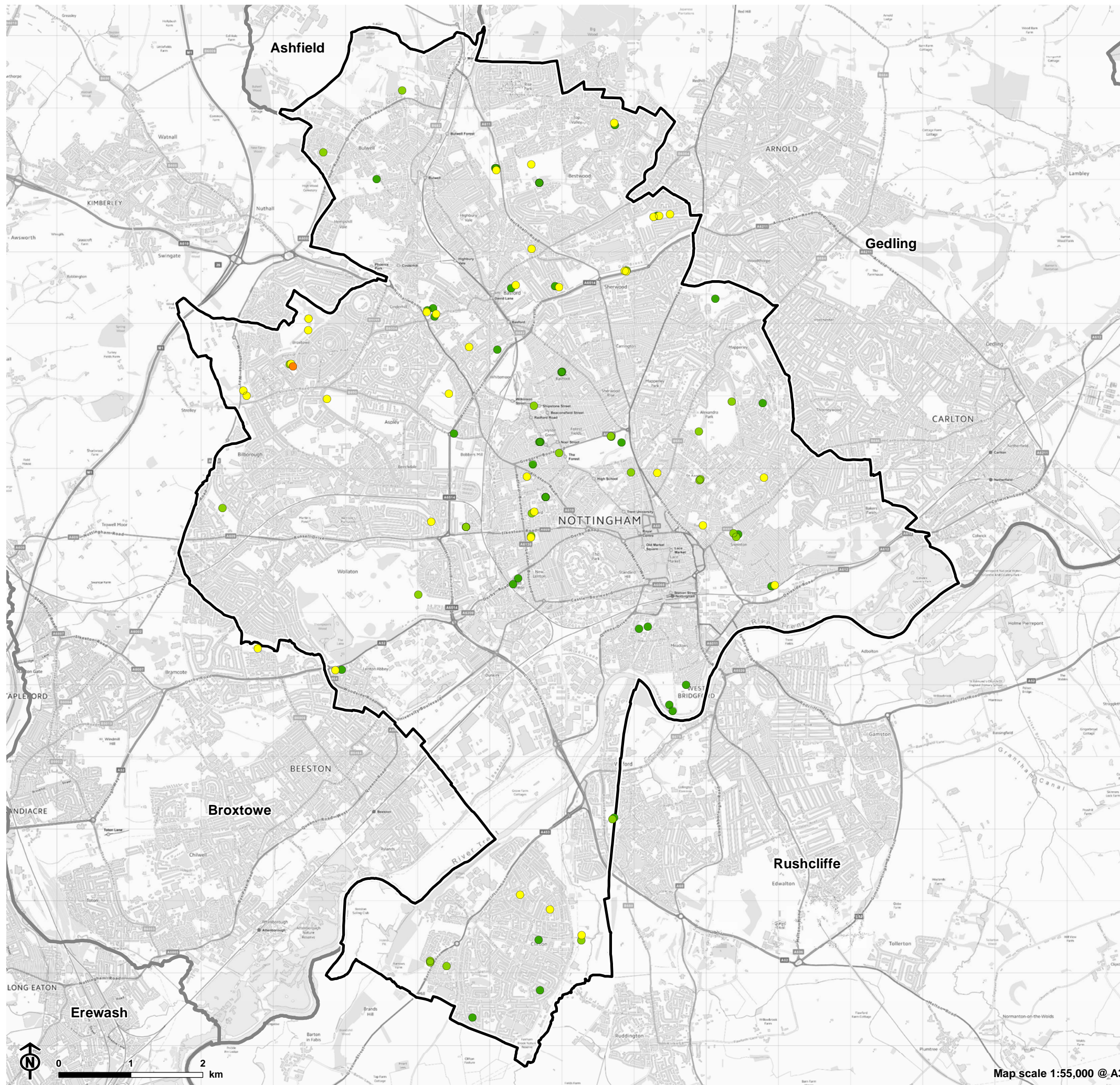
**600m access buffer (representing 8 minutes pedestrian walking time)**

- Publicly accessible
- Publicly accessible: opening hours
- Restricted access: other



Map scale 1:55,000 @ A3

Figure 9.19: Other Play: Quality and Value



- Nottingham City
- Neighbouring local authority
- Overall condition of play equipment**
- 1 - Very poor
- 2 - Poor
- 3 - Fair
- 4 - Good
- 5 - Very good

## Chapter 10

# Addressing future needs and next steps

**10.1** The importance of good access to high quality green spaces to the health and well-being of communities is increasingly well recognised. A range of evidence has shown that access to parks and green spaces can help address national, regional, and local policy priorities relating to tackling obesity, diabetes, and heart disease as well as supporting mental well-being. The Covid-19 pandemic has also highlighted the importance of residents being able to visit a green space within a short walking distance. Evidence generally indicates that the quality of open spaces has a stronger bearing on health outcomes than quantity.

**10.2** Future management of Nottingham's green spaces should aim to create a joined up and multi-functional network of publicly accessible open space which is within easy walking distance of residents' homes. Opportunities should be considered to ensure green spaces are of a high quality and provide a broad range of features and facilities to support the health and wellbeing of the city's residents.

**10.3** The findings of this study may be used to both inform priorities for future investment and set out requirements for green space and play space as part of new development. Future work should aim to ensure that the importance of the city's green spaces to the wider region is fully understood, conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced.

### Prioritising areas for enhancement

**10.4** The results of the green space audit can be scrutinised in several ways to identify specific sites or broad geographic areas where enhancement of publicly accessible space would provide the greatest benefits for the communities they serve.

**10.5** In order to prioritise areas for enhancement, the following should be considered and cross referenced:

- Performance of green spaces against the proposed quality and value standards.
- Areas with deficiencies in access to green space (based on the accessibility standards), especially in areas where green spaces perform poorly against the quality and value standards.
- Quantitative green space deficiencies (ha/1,000 residents).
- Where broad areas or individual sites are identified as falling below the quality and value standards, individual

audit forms should be scrutinised to further understand what aspects of any given site may need improving.

- Areas with poor quality or value sites may be cross referenced with deprivation data to identify areas where improvements may best be undertaken (for instance to help address specific health needs in the city).

Similar processes may be employed to assess green space needs as part of planning applications. In assessing future requirements for green space, it will be necessary to consider:

- Existing local deficiencies;
- Future needs considering projected population growth (projected growth in the child population in the case of play provision); and
- Additional need arising from new development.

### Summary of key findings to identify priority areas for enhancement

**10.6** The following summary of key findings may be used to identify priorities for the city for investment in the coming years. The following summary is set out as a high-level analysis. Further work will be necessary to determine the exact nature of interventions and needs across the city at a local level.

#### Accessibility

**10.7** Analysis of combined deficiency in access to all publicly accessible green spaces indicates:

- There is more deficiency to green spaces in the northern part of the city, compared to in the south (see **Figure 10.1**). Wards which include areas with deficiencies to two or three hierarchies include:
  - Bulwell;
  - Bulwell Forest;
  - Bestwood;
  - Wollaton West;
  - Bilborough;
  - Leen Valley;
  - Berridge;
  - Sherwood; and
  - Mapperley.
- There is generally better access to Natural and Semi Natural green spaces than comparable Parks and Gardens. There is little information on the accessibility to Amenity Green Spaces. Even assuming all the sites with no data are fully accessible, there would still be less accessibility to this type of space than Parks and Gardens or Natural and Semi Natural green spaces

#### Quality and value

**10.8** Several sites across a range of typologies and levels of the hierarchy are currently falling below the proposed quality and value standards. Looking at all sites, there are several clusters of poor performing sites, including:

- In the north-west of the city, including Aspley and the north of Bilborough wards many of the spaces have lower quality and or value scores. In particular, Broxtowe Country Park represents the city-scale green space in the area, and scores lower for both quality and value.
- In the north of the city along the railway line there are a number of green spaces with higher quality but lower value scores. These green spaces should be prioritised for enhancement as they represent 'quick wins' to improve the quality of the site.

#### Play spaces

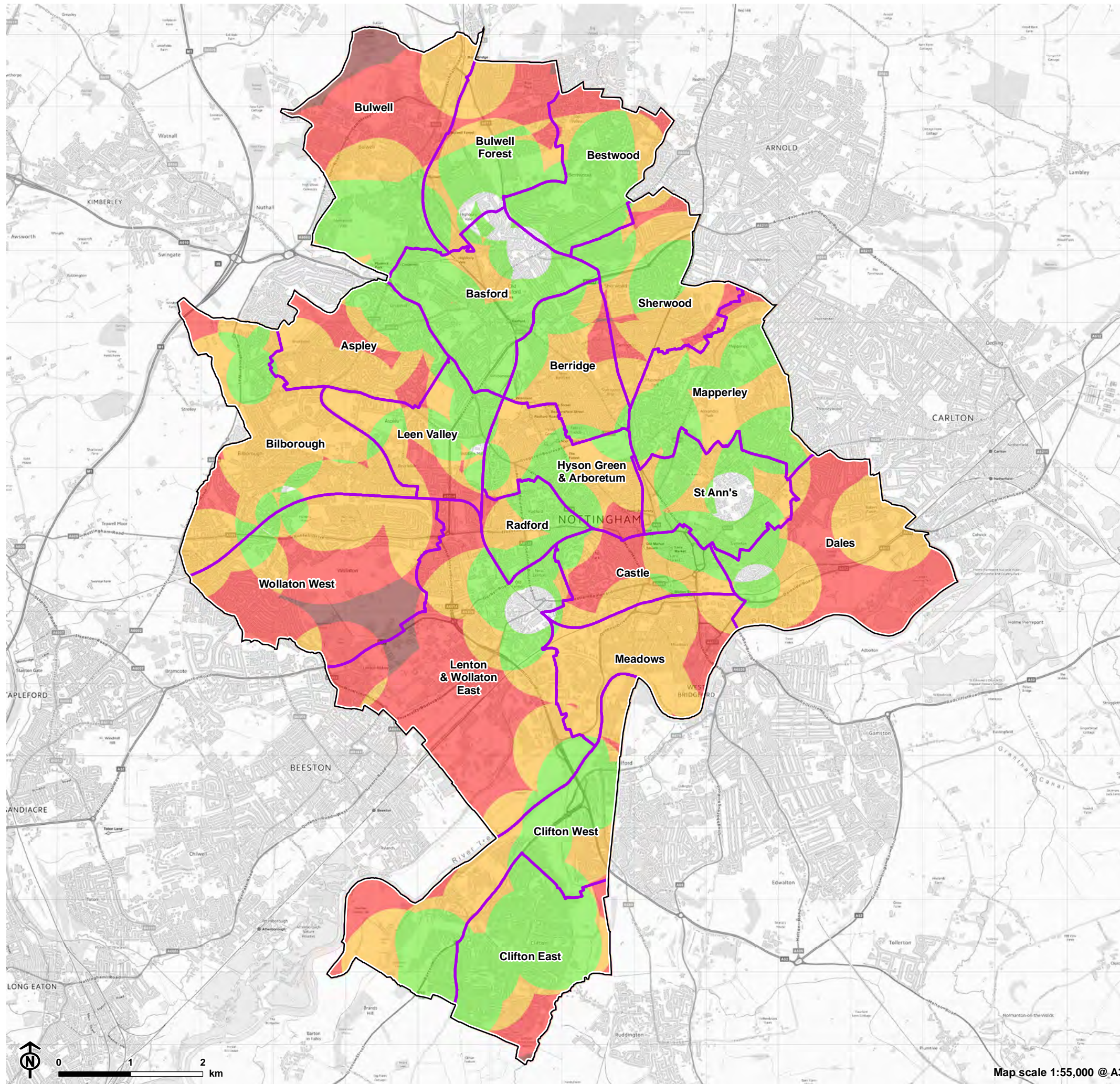
**10.9** Individual audit forms should be utilised to identify areas for improvement for equipped play. Where there is poor provision for areas for play, consideration could be given to expanding the range of facilities at existing Local facilities and upgrading these to Neighbourhood provision.

#### Barriers to access

**10.10** There are a number of barriers to access across Nottingham. These include large roads, railway lines, rivers and canals. In several locations, significant barriers to access are within or adjacent to areas with poor accessibility to green spaces identified as part of the audit. These areas should be considered priority areas for addressing or mitigating against features that may limit safe active travel to green spaces. Appropriate measures may include:

- Provision of fully accessible footbridges over railway lines, rivers or large roads at strategic locations.
- Traffic calming measures at key locations and improved visibility.
- Waymarking to improve orientation and legibility.
- Widening of footways / junction improvements.
- Improving the environment around existing off-road access routes and crossings (underpasses, foot tunnels, bridges etc.).
- Provision of segregated or mixed-use cycle routes.
- Opening additional or new access points at existing green space to reduce travel time.
- Ensuring new development provides additional high quality green space in the surrounding area.

Figure 10.1 Combined deficiency in access to all publicly accessible green spaces by electoral ward



- Nottingham City
  - Neighbouring local authority
  - Wards
- Combined deficiency**
- Deficient in access to 1 level of the hierarchy
  - Deficient in access to 2 levels of the hierarchy
  - Deficient in access to 3 levels of the hierarchy
  - Deficient in access to 4 levels of the hierarchy



Map scale 1:55,000 @ A3

**10.11** The following areas should be considered priority areas and may benefit from several of the potential interventions set out above:

- Colwick Country Park is difficult to access from most parts of Nottingham due to the A612 and the railway line. This makes pedestrian access onto the site more difficult.
- The River Trent provides a barrier to residents from Clifton East and Clifton West accessing open spaces to the north of the river.

### Next steps

**10.12** The findings of this audit provide the basis for developing and updating the council's policies associated with publicly accessible open space and play space. The council should consider implementing the following actions:

- Review and update of any relevant planning policies, procedures, and supplementary guidance on open space and play. Open space standards set out as part of the open space and green audit should be incorporated into planning policies and cross referenced within other relevant policies. Policies should set out the circumstances that new development will need to provide open space / play space on-site, off-site, or provide financial contributions towards improving existing open space.
- Ensure that the findings of the audit are used to inform green space improvement programmes. Ensure that investment needs are included within updates of the Nottingham Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- Consider establishing processes for periodic review and update of the data for green spaces in the city. Any new green spaces should be captured as part of the GIS data set that has been updated as part of this audit.
- Establish processes for assessing the need for additional green space as part of new development. It is recommended that developers are required to undertake an assessment of the impact of proposals on green space provision. Proposals should set out how local needs for open space and play will be met.

**10.13 Table 10.1** below outlines the key consideration to identify priorities for green space enhancement across the city. The table may also provide the basis for assessing green space requirements as part of any development proposals.



Table 10.1: Identifying priorities for open space and play enhancement

Area of assessment / Data	Key considerations / management approach
<b>Quantity standard</b>	<p>As stated above, additional analysis could be undertaken to better understand current and future performance of the borough against the proposed quantity standard. Whilst the quantity of open space / play space is an important factor, quality, value and ease of accessibility of open spaces may have a more significant impact in terms of the recreational offer and benefits afforded to health and wellbeing.</p> <p>In areas where the quantity of open space falls below the proposed standard (both in terms of current population and projected growth):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Seek to ensure open spaces and play spaces are resilient to increased use through ensuring the use of appropriate materials and the delivery of maintenance operations. Ensure open spaces support a range of facilities for formal and informal recreation.</li> <li>■ Seek opportunities to incorporate new open spaces/ play spaces within new development or improve off site open space/ play space.</li> <li>■ Consider improvements to public realm/ streetscapes to ensure they are family friendly, provide areas to sit, encourage active travel and provide opportunities for socialising and quiet contemplation.</li> </ul> <p>The quantity standard may be used as one indicator to assist in assessing play and open space needs as part of new development.</p>
<b>Accessibility</b>	<p>Residents should have access to a range of different types of open spaces. Areas with deficiencies in access to open space / play space should be prioritised for improvement, similar principles to the above apply. However, further consideration should also be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Improving connectivity between open spaces and enhancing active travel routes and public transport connections.</li> <li>■ Improving entrances/providing new entrances at key open spaces to reduce travel time.</li> <li>■ Where possible addressing or designing out issues around barriers to access (e.g. busy roads, water courses).</li> </ul> <p>Levels of accessibility (including deficiencies and areas with good local accessibility to multiple sites) may be one indicator to assist in assessing play and open space needs as part of new development. Particular emphasis should be placed on the local accessibility standards as an indicator of areas with or without easy access to open space / play space close to home.</p>
<b>Quality and Value</b>	<p>Application of the proposed quality and value standards provides a broad indication of the type of management approach that may be needed across any given area or site. Performance of open spaces / play spaces against the quality and value benchmarks may be used to identify areas for enhancement. The results can also be used to identify sites where new development may contribute towards enhancements as part of 'off-site' open space / play requirements.</p> <p style="background-color: #92d050; padding: 2px;">Higher quality / higher value (+ +)</p> <p>These sites are the best open spaces in the city; offering the greatest value to the surrounding local communities.</p> <p>Future management should seek to maintain the standards and ensure they continue to meet the communities they serve</p> <p style="background-color: #ffc107; padding: 2px;">Higher quality / lower value (+ -)</p> <p>The audit has found these sites to be achieving a sufficient standard for quality, most likely with sufficient levels of maintenance. Value for these sites falls short for the site typology and level of the hierarchy, for instance through a lack of suitable features and facilities.</p> <p>Wherever possible, the preferred management approach should be to enhance the value of the site in terms of its present primary typology through the provision of additional features, facilities or implementing appropriate design interventions.</p> <p>If this is not possible, the next best policy approach is to consider whether the site would be considered as high value if managed for another primary open space purpose. For instance, reviewing site priorities to manage a Park and Garden as an Amenity Green Space or Natural and Semi Natural green space.</p> <p style="background-color: #dc3545; padding: 2px;">Lower quality / higher value (- +)</p> <p>These spaces meet or exceed the proposed standard for value but fall short on the proposed quality standard. These sites will include the features, facilities and attributes that is expected of the type and size of</p>

**Chapter 10**

Addressing future needs and next steps

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	<p>open space, but their condition may be poor, and the site may be failing to achieve expected standards for maintenance and management.</p> <p>These sites provide most opportunity for 'quick wins' in terms of improving open space provision through focussing management on quality improvement and seeking opportunities to ensure open spaces are welcoming and safe for use by the local community.</p>
	<p>Lower quality / lower value (- -)</p>
	<p>Enhancing both the quality and value of these sites should be considered a priority, particularly in areas which suffer from a deficiency in access to or quantity of publicly accessible open space. Potential alternative uses should also be explored for these sites where it can be demonstrated that loss of a lower quality/ lower value space will not result in a local area falling below the open space standards, but will result in a gain for an area of undersupply.</p>