

Coventry City Council

Green Space Strategy

2019-2023



people spaces places



Coventry City Council



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2019 – 2023

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Executive Summary

This is the revised Green Space Strategy for Coventry for the period 2019/20 to 2023/24. The Strategy builds upon the earlier ten-year Green Space Strategy published in 2008. The previous Strategy formed the framework against which significant achievements were delivered including investment in children's play, more spaces being managed positively for wildlife, greater community involvement with 30 friends or volunteer groups now working with the park service, the achievement of five Green Flag Awards, the delivery of large scale investment in War Memorial Park and Coombe Country Park supported by external funding and achieving a national award for the wildflower planting on key highways verges and within selected parks. These achievements, along with other factors, has led to a significant increase in the use of green spaces in Coventry, reflecting the national picture.

Improvements have been delivered against a backdrop of reducing resources and significant budget reductions. This strategy recognises the changed economic circumstances and the recommendations set out have been developed in this context. However, this is an exciting time for Coventry with European City of Sport 2019 and Year of Wellbeing 2019 leading into City of Culture 2021 presenting opportunities for parks and green spaces to continue to play a significant role in the lives of residents.

This strategy has been developed through extensive research and data capture to update the green space mapping dataset, public consultation and two phases of stakeholder and community workshops to identify issues and potential solutions and to look at priorities for the future. The city's Green Space and Heritage Forum has also been involved in discussion at key points. A Council Task and Finish Group has also shaped the brief for the strategy and received updates about the progress of the strategy and the Council's Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board has also overseen the development of the strategy. The Strategy has been subject to internal consultation with Council officers across a range of service areas and this strategy has been through a formal public consultation exercise.

Open Space is defined as:

“All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity”¹.

Green space is a subset of open space that includes vegetated land or water within an urban area such as parks and (public) gardens, playing fields, children’s play areas, nature reserves, woods and other natural areas, grassed areas, cemeteries and allotments along with green corridors like paths, disused railway lines, rivers and canals. Green space does not include agricultural land, private gardens or civic spaces that are part of the built landscape. Green Belt and green space are not synonymous, since the former is a specific planning designation to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.

The Vision for the 2018 Green Space Strategy is:

Coventry City Council will work in partnership to ensure that green spaces in Coventry are high quality, safe and accessible and contribute to the health, wellbeing and quality of life of local people.

The Green Space Strategy recognises and promotes the multi-functional nature of green spaces and aims to ensure that, going forward, green spaces are well managed and maintained, accessible and contribute to cross-cutting agendas within the city, including:

- providing accessible spaces for play, sport and informal recreation
- improved physical and mental health and wellbeing and contributing to a reduction in childhood obesity
- more active and healthy lifestyles
- increased community cohesion
- as venues for community and commercial events
- contributing to the heritage and cultural offer in the city
- active transport initiatives including safe, traffic free routes

¹ NPPF (2019)- Glossary

- improving air quality, contributing to carbon capture and offering opportunities for sustainable urban drainage solutions and flood relief and mitigating against climate change
- sustaining and improving biodiversity and providing opportunities for contact with nature
- improved quality of life.

The Green Space Strategy recognises the important role that Coventry City Council has to play both as a significant landowner but also offering a leadership role that affects the delivery of green space services and the quality of life of residents. This strategy endorses the partnership approach already adopted by the Council and recognises the regular and significant contribution of local communities as volunteers, members of friends groups and other organisations to maintaining and improving green spaces in the city and seeks to encourage more participation in the future.

Green spaces are important for Coventry's residents. A questionnaire-based survey, distributed to 5,000 households across the city and also offered online, generated 1244 responses. The survey found that that seven in ten people (70.4%) visit green spaces at least once a week (three out of ten daily). Over nine in ten people agreed that parks and green spaces enhance their health and wellbeing; improve quality of life; and have a positive impact on the local community. Satisfaction with green spaces is also high with over 70% of respondents to the survey satisfied or very satisfied with parks and gardens. However, satisfaction levels with other types of space, notably children's play and provision for teenagers and young people was significantly lower.

Whilst destination sites are important, many people visit green spaces within their local area. Two thirds of respondents (61.3%) to the survey take less than ten minutes to travel to their most used park or green space. This strategy and planning policy recognise this finding and the principle is carried through to the recommendations and proposed local standards for green space provision.

The Strategy also recognises that there are barriers to using and accessing green spaces and that further work is required to address perceptions of anti-social behaviour, personal safety, dog fouling and access issues relating to volumes of traffic, busy roads and safety concerns for cyclists. Further investment is also required to improve the quality and facilities of some green spaces.

The Green Space Strategy is underpinned by new research, with extensive mapping and classification of green spaces across the city. This allows the supply of green spaces to be better understood and the process adopted has been designed to inform the planning process and provide the evidence base for adopting local and national standards and securing developer

contributions to address deficiencies in the quantity, accessibility and quality of green spaces. Whilst many areas of the city overall benefit from a good supply of green spaces, and therefore good accessibility, there are deficiencies in some wards. Many wards also have limited access to specific types of green space such as natural and semi-natural green space or outdoor sports facilities. The approach to mapping and classifying green spaces and the conclusions about the supply and accessibility of green spaces is set out in some detail in section 4 of this Green Space Strategy. The consultation findings in section 5 also bring in perceptions of the city's residents with respect to the supply and accessibility of green spaces.

The quality of green spaces across the city has been assessed using a methodology based upon the Green Flag Award – the national quality award for parks and green spaces. A total of 233 spaces were visited and assessed, providing an overall quality score, as well as scores for specific criteria such as litter, standards of grounds maintenance and management for biodiversity. Like the supply and distribution of green spaces, the quality assessment found a significant variation across the city, with quality scores ranging from five to 89 (maximum possible score 100). Overall the average quality score was 43, which whilst lower than the Green Flag pass mark of 66, compares favourably with other local authority areas in the region. Parks and gardens were the highest quality spaces with an average quality score of nearly 57, with cemeteries and churchyards scoring an average of 53. Whilst some wards across the city performed significantly better than others, there are high quality spaces in each ward, meaning that most residents have access to a high quality green space near where they live. More detailed analysis is set out in section 4 of this Strategy. The quality assessment should be repeated in year 5 of the delivery of the strategy to measure change against the 2017 baseline and to provide updated evidence for planning policy purposes.

This Green Space Strategy sets out 62 recommendations for action over the next five years. These recommendations are linked to the aims of the Strategy:

- providing accessible spaces for play, sport and informal recreation
- more active and healthy lifestyles, improved physical and mental health and wellbeing and contributing to a reduction in childhood obesity
- increased community cohesion
- contributing to the heritage and cultural offer in the city
- active transport initiatives including safe, traffic free routes
- sustaining and improving biodiversity and green infrastructure
- securing additional resources.

The recommendations are included in the action plan in section 7. This Strategy advocates the delivery of the recommendations through a partnership approach. Coventry City Council can

demonstrate a long-standing track record of partnership and works with a range of community based and voluntary sector organisations, other local authorities across the region and a range of delivery partners. There is also partnership working with other green space managers such as housing associations and the two universities. This reflects the key messages that emerged from the two phases of community workshops that were delivered to inform the development of the Strategy.

This Green Space Strategy has been developed based on budgets having been reduced significantly over recent years and looking forward, whilst further cost savings may need to be made, that the financial position is expected to be relatively stable. Currently the green space service receives around £300,000 annually from developer contributions through the planning process for improvements to improve the quality, accessibility and carrying capacity of existing green spaces. The adoption of Local Standards and updating of planning policy is expected to ensure that these contributions can be maintained and grown over future years.

There is also the opportunity for green space assets to be used more effectively to generate income to help sustain the service. A review is currently underway and once completed annual targets will be set for income generation.



1 Introduction

1.1 *Structure of document*

This Green Space Strategy is structured around a number of chapters:

- Introduction – describes the process of developing the strategy
- Why? – sets out the needs for a green space strategy and outlines the scope
- Context – provides background to Coventry and then looks at the national and local policy context relating to green spaces
- Current Green Space Provision – describes the approach to recording and classifying green spaces
- Consultation – summarises consultation processes and findings
- Analysis and Recommendations – draws upon the earlier sections of the strategy to set out recommendations for the future and their justification
- Delivery – sets out how the strategy will be delivered including the action plan
- Monitoring and evaluation – sets out how the strategy will be reviewed during delivery and evaluated at the end of the timeframe.

1.2 *Developing the Strategy*

This Strategy has been developed through a process of reviewing the previous Green Space Strategy produced in 2008, extensive research and data capture to update the green space mapping dataset, public consultation and a review of previous consultation, and two phases of stakeholder and community workshops to identify issues and potential solutions and to look at prioritisation. The city's Green Space and Heritage Forum has also been involved in discussion at key points in the development of this strategy. A Council Task and Finish Group has shaped the brief for the strategy and received updates about the progress of the strategy and the Council's Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board has also overseen the development of the strategy. The Strategy has also been subject to internal consultation with Council officers across a range of service areas and this strategy has also been out to public consultation.

A list of the organisations that have contributed to the strategy are included in Appendix B.

1.3 Our Vision

The vision set out in the 2008 strategy was:

To provide attractive, high quality, accessible green spaces that are well maintained, safe, clean and are important to local people. This will be achieved through clear, open and robust planning policies that ensure that green space contributes to local character and plays an important role in everyday life of residents, whilst supporting the regeneration of the city”.

This Vision whilst containing many elements was reviewed early in the development of this strategy including discussion at the initial stakeholder workshops. The 2008 Vision was found to not adequately address the health and wellbeing agenda that are now a much higher priority than in 2008. In addition, it did not recognise biodiversity and the role of partnerships and community participation that are now more significant factors in Coventry. In addition, Coventry has been awarded European City of Sport for 2019 and 2019 will also be Year of Wellbeing proposed by The Coventry and Warwickshire Place Forum to raise the profile of health and wellbeing opportunities for everyone. Furthermore, Coventry will be City of Culture in 2021.

The Vision proposed for this Green Space Strategy is therefore:

Coventry City Council will work in partnership to ensure that green spaces in Coventry are high quality, safe and accessible and contribute to the health, wellbeing and quality of life of local people.

1.4 Timescales

The previous Green Space Strategy covered a period of ten years to 2018. Local government across the country and Coventry has seen significant change over the past decade. This is likely to continue in the foreseeable future, so consequently this Green Space Strategy will focus on a shorter timeframe of five years from 2019 to 2023.



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2 Why a Green Space Strategy?

2.1 *The Benefits of Green Space*

High quality parks and public spaces create economic, social and environmental value. They are also highly valued by local people. Research carried out by CABE Space suggests that 85% of people surveyed felt that the quality of public space and the built environment has a direct impact on their lives and the way they feel².

Research published by HLF in the State of UK Parks 2014 found:

- 2.6 billion visits made to UKs parks each year
- 54% of adults use parks at least once per month
- 83% of households with children under 5 visit their park at least once a month
- £30 million raised annually by friends / user groups.

Subsequently the follow up report State of UK Parks 2016 found that:

- Parks used regularly by 37 million people in UK
- 57% of adults use parks at least once per month
- 83% of households with children under 5 visit their park at least once a month
- £50 million raised annually by friends / user groups
- £70 million value of volunteering.

² CABE (2002) - Streets of Shame. Summary of findings from 'Public Attitudes to Architecture and the Built Environment'.

In terms of economic benefits, there is evidence that high quality green spaces have positive impacts upon property prices, are good for business and being close to public space adds economic value³.

Safe, clean spaces encourage people to walk more and therefore offer significant health benefits. Parks and green spaces offer places for sport, recreation and relaxation, benefitting physical health and mental wellbeing. There is a substantial body of evidence that demonstrates access to good quality local spaces can help people live longer and green spaces can provide solutions to redress worsening public health.⁴

Green spaces can also bring significant community benefits as places to play, encouraging neighbourliness and social inclusion and as a venue for events that bring people together⁵.

Networks of linked green spaces and green corridors can encourage cycling and lower dependency on the car, reducing levels of traffic. Coventry despite its high density development in parts of the city is well served by green corridors with the Rover Sowe Corridor and the canal network providing important routes for people and wildlife. Other projects seek to make the River Sherbourne more accessible.

The network of Public Rights of Way: bridleways and public footpaths provide important links between green spaces and residential areas and allow access to the many woodlands within Coventry. The role of Public Rights of Way is recognised by this Green Space Strategy but are not explicitly covered by the analysis.

The environmental and economic benefits of green spaces are well understood: open spaces improve air quality, provide sustainable urban drainage solutions and can help mitigate against climate change, whilst trees cool air and provide shade⁶. Green spaces are also important areas for wildlife and biodiversity and provide opportunities for local people to experience nature first hand.

Parks and green spaces are the most accessible and well used leisure and recreational facilities across the country and within Coventry. The Coventry Green Infrastructure Strategy recognises the

³ CABE Space (2005) - Does money grow on trees?

⁴ Sustainable Development Commission (2008) - Health, Place and Nature: How Outdoor Environments Influence Health and Wellbeing - A Knowledge Base

⁵ GreenSpace (2004) – Your Parks, The Benefits of Parks and Green Space

⁶ Trust for Public Land (2008) - How Much Value Does The City Of Philadelphia Receive From Its Park And Recreation

value of green spaces in contributing to the image and environmental quality of the city and enhancing people's mental and physical wellbeing.

2.2 *The Need for a Green Space Strategy*

The previous Green Space Strategy covered a period of ten years to 2018. Much has changed since the original strategy was developed in 2008:

- New local plan and local planning policy
- Green space improvements and investment has improved the quality of many spaces
- Greater community involvement has had a positive impact on green space
- Some loss to development and also creation of new spaces
- Different economic and funding environment
- Other policies and strategies have changed – the health and wellbeing agenda is increasingly important and alignment with new priorities is required
- New opportunities such as those offered by European City of Sport 2019, Year of Wellbeing 2019 and City of Culture 2021.
- Renewed international and national focus on climate change and the commitment in 2019 by the UK government to become carbon neutral by 2050.

2.3 *The Scope of the Strategy*

Whilst the National Planning Policy Framework has resulted in significant change to national planning policy and guidance, there is a gap in planning documentation relating to green space. Therefore, we refer to earlier national guidance in Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17) Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2002) which specifies that open space should be taken to mean: 'all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can also act as a visual amenity.' It should be noted that above ground sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDs) with permanent water, such as attenuation ponds, are included in this definition and can bring benefits in terms of drainage and flood alleviation, biodiversity and landscape value.

Green Space is a subset of the wider classification of Open Space and excludes areas of public space such as civic squares that are predominantly built development. In addition, green space does not include private residential gardens or incidental areas, such as road verges, or streets (unless these form part of a link in the open space network).

This strategy is concerned with green space within Coventry and includes all green space within the city (and key sites such as Coombe Country Park that lies outside) regardless of ownership. Through the classification process the strategy considers the level of public accessibility of these green spaces.

The scope of the Coventry Green Space Strategy:

- The strategy covers a five-year period from 2019/20 to 2023/24;
- Includes all green space (including public open space and community open space) that exceeds a size threshold of 0.1ha.
- Private residential gardens or incidental areas, such as road verges, or streets, are outside the scope of the strategy, as per national and regional guidance.
- To provide an evidence base to inform the planning process.
- To provide recommendations for the adoption of Local Standards relating to the quantity, quality and accessibility of future green space provision based on the principle of no net loss of green space.
- Support the Council's s106 and CIL planning obligations, policy and guidance, by providing the necessary evidence base for where new or improved facilities are needed.
- Inform future decision making, especially the funding of capital and maintenance expenditure programmes.
- To raise the profile of parks and green spaces and to demonstrate the commitment of the Streetpride and Greenspaces team to contributing to wider Council priorities.
- To inform service delivery and set out recommendations for Coventry City Council and partners organisations to deliver over the timeframe of the strategy.
- Provide a framework for all those involved in raising standards of green space management in Coventry.

2.4 Recent Achievements

The 2008 Green Space Strategy has been reviewed as part of the process of developing this Strategy. The review found that overall 72% of recommendations achieved / partially achieved from the 2008 Strategy.

Key achievements have included:

1. increased level of customer satisfaction with green space. Annual consultation carried out at ranger events & by the Insight team shows satisfaction levels are increasing.
2. promotion of the development of friends groups. Ranger teams are promoting and supporting friends and volunteer groups and they are now engaged with 30 such groups across the city.
3. development of the Green Space and Heritage Forum – 30 groups now involved across the city.
4. achieving national awards – 5 sites hold the Green Flag Award.
5. achieving national awards – In Bloom - Coventry City Centre achieved a gold award & won the City Centre category in 2013.
6. achieving a Gold Award in the Green Apple Awards in 2014 for the Pictorial Meadows introduced along highways verges, traffic islands and selected parks. Currently 20,000 square metres of land are managed in this way for biodiversity and visual impact.
7. protecting our green spaces - Fields in Trust chose to launch their Century Fields Initiative from the War Memorial Park making it the first designated Century Field Park in the country.
8. developing new partnerships – the Coventry on the Move in Parks project has seen investment in waymarked walking routes in 44 parks and green spaces across the city. Options for subsequent phases of delivery building on these initial successes are currently in operation.
9. delivering improvements in parks – Over 60 sites improved since 2008 with Heritage and Big Lottery, S106 and Council funding.

10. management of more green space - 40 new sites transferred to Park Service portfolio from the asset management team with a further phase still to come. Six new sites adopted from housing developments.
11. delivery of the Playbuilder programme with investment of £440,000 in nine sites.
12. all play areas brought up to current standards achieving the British / European Standard BS EN1176.
13. production of Management and Maintenance Plans – 5 Green Flag sites plus 6 other key green spaces have management plans.
14. improved information about green spaces through changes to the Council website.
15. improved signage for key parks and green spaces.
16. increased use of allotments by people with disabilities.
17. increased political awareness of the value of green spaces to Coventry.
18. increased the capacity of community groups to deliver projects in parks.
19. increased the amount of volunteer participation in parks and green spaces. In 2016/17, 210 volunteers working with the Ranger team contributed over 1,100 hours and over the same period 148 volunteers contributed over 800 hours at Coombe Country Park. In addition, friends groups across the city contribute thousands of hours annually.
20. improved environmental management – green waste recycling performance has been improved. Pesticide use has been reduced. Peat free compost used for planting and bedding schemes.
21. more spaces designated as important for wildlife – the number of Local Wildlife Sites has increased from 41 in 2008 to 68 in 2016.
22. increase in the amount of land positively managed for biodiversity – wildflower creations on 20,000 m³ of highway verges and other grassland.



3 Context

3.1 *About Coventry*

Coventry has a population of 316,900 people (as recorded by the 2011 Census) and as such is the 11th largest city in the UK (based on population). Recent population estimates (2017 Mid-Year Estimates) suggest that Coventry's population has increased to over 360,000.

The average age in Coventry is 33.5 years which is significantly lower than England's average of 40. A quarter of the population are aged under 25. Coventry is a diverse city with 26% of the population from Black and Minority Ethnic groups.

Based on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, Coventry is amongst the most deprived fifth of all local authorities England. At a more local level, some wards are among the most deprived in the country. There is also considerable variation between different wards in the city, and high levels of inequality, which is reflected by variation in life expectancy and health outcomes.

The Office for National Statistics recognises Coventry as the fastest growing city outside of Greater London, with job creation continuing to grow and the city's two universities thriving. This growth builds upon decades of economic reinvention and diversification, with the city now home to Jaguar Land Rovers global headquarters as well as key head offices for Peugeot and Severn Trent.

The city has campuses for the University of Coventry and The University of Warwick and both institutions own and manage green space including sports grounds.

Coventry, located in the West Midlands, is well connected by road, rail and other transport networks. Coventry City Centre is 20 minutes from Birmingham city centre by train, and a review of population data and travel times would suggest that there are approximately 1 million people resident within 30 minutes travel time of Coventry City Centre.

3.2 Policy Context

3.2.1 National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework, Communities and Local Government, 2012

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012 and set out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. During the development of this strategy, a consultation process on revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework was carried out and the revised NPPF was published on 24 July 2018.

The NPPF retains the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development', which is defined by five principles as set out in the UK Sustainable Development Strategy:

- living within the planet's environmental limits
- ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- achieving a sustainable economy
- promoting good governance
- and using sound science.

Town centres are recognised as integral to communities and as such their viability, vitality and competitiveness should be supported. Local plans should define the extent of town centres and their primary shopping areas and set policies to define which uses will be permitted in such locations.

The NPPF makes explicit that local plans should encourage brownfield sites to be brought back into effective use, as long as the site is not of high environmental value. Local authorities are able to set local targets for the use of brownfield land.

Areas of land designated as part of the Green Belt, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Parks and other protected sites will not be overridden by the presumption. The NPPF recognises the "intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside", whether designated or otherwise.

The published NPPF (2018) offers protection for open space and paragraph 97 states that:

“Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- b) 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
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use”.

The NPPF also places a strong emphasis on the need for local authorities to undertake local needs assessments for open space, sport and recreation to ensure that there is adequate sports provision.

Communities are able to designate land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans subject to specific criteria being met.

Sport England: Towards an Active Nation, Strategy 2016-2021

In December 2015 the Government published *Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation*. The strategy sets a bold and ambitious direction for sport policy and looks beyond simple participation to how sport changes lives and becomes a force for social good. At its heart are five outcomes: physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development and economic development.

This strategy sets out how Sport England will put this policy into practice. The key changes they are making are:

- focusing more money and resources on tackling inactivity because this is where the gains for the individual and for society are greatest.
- investing more in children and young people from the age of five to build positive attitudes to sport and activity as the foundations of an active life.
- helping sport to keep pace with the digital expectations of customers.
- working nationally and encouraging stronger local collaboration to deliver a more joined-up experience of sport and activity for customers.

- working with the sector to encourage innovation and share best practice particularly through applying the principles and practical learning of behaviour change.

3.2.2 *Local Policy*

Coventry City Council Local Plan, 2017

This Local Plan sets out Coventry's blueprint and vision to enhance its position at the centre of the Coventry and Warwickshire Sub-region and contribute towards the West Midlands engine for growth.

The plan reports that current predictions project Coventry's population 'to grow by in excess of 89,000 people between 2011 and 2031'. This projected population growth has resulted in an Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for 42,400 homes in addition to approximately 215 ha of employment land and 106,000 m² of retail floor space. There is also an estimate of 12,000 (600 per annum) affordable homes 'which are to be provided as a proportion of total need and from within the existing housing stock'. An updated Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) highlighted that the city can accommodate between 24,600 and 25,000 homes. Policy DS1 states: "However 'it is not possible to deliver all of this additional development land within the city boundary', hence the Council 'will continue to work actively with neighbouring Councils through the Duty to Co-operate to ensure that appropriate provision is made elsewhere within the Housing Market Area'".

The Local Plan embraces this growth and identifies land for new homes, new jobs and new retail and community uses. For the first time in over 50 years the Council is planning proactively for the removal of land from the city's Green Belt to help facilitate growth and development as well as creating high quality urban and natural environments for those wishing to live and work in Coventry. This includes two significant urban extensions to the north and west of the city. This growth will also be supported by new, high quality infrastructure to combat congestion and transport issues, provide new high quality public green spaces, continue to invest in the city's ever-improving education system and enhance the health facilities and opportunities required to support all aspects of the city's population.

Vision, Strategy and Objectives

The overarching vision of this Local Plan reflects the Council's wider corporate plan (The Council Plan).

The Council has utilised a range of previous consultation activity and evidence to help formally shape the vision and objectives for Coventry. The table on page 10 of the plan identifies key objectives which inform and support the overarching vision, extracts relevant to the GSS are shown below:

Local Plan Objectives	Sub Objectives	Supporting Policies
5. Creating an attractive, cleaner and greener city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and conserve the irregular pattern of the public footpath network and characteristic feature of roads and lanes. • To achieve a significant improvement in the quality of design, maintenance and accessibility of buildings and spaces in all parts of the city in order to provide a cleaner, sustainable and attractive built, historic and green environment. • Protect and enhance the city's most sensitive and highest quality green spaces. 	Policy GB1, Policy GE1, Policy GE2, Policy GE3, Policy GE4, Policy DE1, Policy HE1, Policy HE2.
8. Improve the health and wellbeing of local residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a smoke free Coventry. • Improve access to high quality health provisions where they are most needed. • Encourage healthy and active lifestyles. • Encouraging walking and cycling. 	Policy HW1, Policy AC1, Policy AC4, Policy EM1, Policy EM2, Policy EM3, Policy EM6.
9. Support safer communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that new developments, open spaces, residential and business areas are designed in ways that reduce the opportunities for crime. • Ensure high quality design also helps reduce the fear of crime. 	Policy DE1.

Table 1 – Local Plan Objectives

There is a chapter within the plan entitled 'Green Belt and Green Environment', this establishes a new approach to how Coventry's green environment will be planned, maintained, protected and enhanced. It presents opportunities to create more sustainable development and patterns of growth that will help meet Coventry's development needs, whilst seeking to protect the city's highest value and most sensitive green spaces. The chapter also covers all aspects of the city's green

environment including the Green Belt, green spaces, environmental designations and protected trees. This section directly refers to and links in with the Coventry GSS.

Green Belt

The city has two distinctive types of Green Belt – the open countryside of Ancient Arden on its western boundary, predominantly used for agriculture and quiet, passive leisure; and Green Belt corridors, which are extensive and continuous tracts of open land that extend through the built-up area of the city, to and from the countryside beyond. Of greatest prominence is the wider Green Belt that encircles the city, helping prevent urban sprawl and ensuring Coventry does not merge with surrounding towns, villages and cities. The growth pressures facing Coventry has meant that there has been a strong need to explore the most sustainable and appropriate opportunities to expand the city and a number of development options have been identified within the city's Green Belt.

Green Environment

This section states that high quality and well-connected green infrastructure has the potential to make Coventry a much more attractive and prosperous city, and a healthier place to live, work and enjoy, with multiple benefits for the economy, the environment and people. It cites local networks of high quality and well-managed open spaces help to create urban environments that are attractive, clean and safe, and can play a major part in improving people's sense of wellbeing.

Green infrastructure will also have an important role to play in helping the city adapt to climate change. This will include moderating urban temperatures, storing excess rainfall, increasing surface porosity to ease drainage, providing shade via tree canopies, and providing green oases in urban areas.

Policy GE1 Green Infrastructure confirms that:

The Council will protect green infrastructure based on an analysis of existing assets, informed by the Green Infrastructure Study and Green Space Strategy by incorporating the Council's Green Space Standards, and characterisation assessments.

New development will be expected to maintain the quantity, quality and functionality of existing green infrastructure. Where quantity is not retained, enhancement to quality is expected. Where the opportunity arises, and in line with the city's most up-to-date Green Space Strategy, the



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Council will also expect new developments to enhance green infrastructure, and create and improve linkages between individual areas.

The plan refers to the long-term vision for green infrastructure in Coventry, as outlined in the Green Infrastructure Study, which is the provision of a city-wide network of high quality, well managed and well connected, multi-functional green space, delivering a wide range of benefits to those living, working and visiting the city, and improving the attractiveness of the city as a whole. The suite of green infrastructure assets is classified under three overarching categories of 'formal', 'informal' and 'functional', as follows:

- Formal - urban parks, country and regional parks, formal and private gardens, institutional grounds (for example schools and hospitals), outdoor sports facilities and civic squares and spaces.
- Informal - recreation spaces and playing fields, play areas, village greens, urban commons, incidental green space, natural and semi-natural spaces including woodlands, hedgerows, scrub, meadows, wetlands, open and running water, and bare rock habitats, rivers and canals including their banks, road and rail corridors and verges, cycling routes and rights of way, national and local nature reserves and locally designated sites for nature conservation and historic landscapes, archaeological and historic sites.
- Functional - allotments, community gardens, city farms, orchards, roof gardens, urban edge farmland, cemeteries and churchyards, sustainable urban drainage schemes and flood storage areas.

The plan states that green infrastructure is considered equal to all other forms of infrastructure and will be viewed as a critical element in the determination of planning applications. The regulations state that where open space is created within developments, it will be of a high and lasting design quality which seeks to minimise on-going maintenance pressures. Its efficiency will be maximised through the designing in of multiple functions, including biodiversity, sustainable drainage, natural shading, informal recreation, adventure play, art appreciation and organised sports. The layout of this open space will also support the existing green infrastructure network.

This section concludes that the green infrastructure network will be accessible, useable and useful for both people and wildlife and that it will be a key contributor to Coventry's aim to be a more sustainable city and its actions against climate change and help the city to project a positive and attractive image.

Policy GE2 Green Space confirms that:

Development involving the loss of green space that is of value for amenity, recreational, outdoor sports and/or community use will not be permitted unless specifically identified as part of a strategic land use allocation, or it can be demonstrated that:

- a) An assessment showing there is no longer a demand, or prospect of demand, for the recreational use of the site or any other green space use; or
- b) A deficiency would not be created through its loss, measured against the most up-to-date Coventry Green Space standards; or
- c) The loss resulting from any proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision.

Policy GE3: Biodiversity, Geological, Landscape and Archaeological Conservation confirms that:

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Ancient Woodlands, Local Wildlife and Geological Sites will be protected and enhanced. Proposals for development on other sites, having biodiversity or geological conservation value, will be permitted provided that they protect, enhance and/or restore habitat biodiversity.

Development proposals will be expected to ensure that they:

- a) lead to a net gain of biodiversity, where appropriate, by means of an approved ecological assessment of existing site features and development impacts.
- b) protect or enhance biodiversity assets and secure their long-term management and maintenance.
- c) avoid negative impacts on existing biodiversity.
- d) preserve species which are legally protected, in decline, are rare within Coventry or which are covered by national, regional or local Biodiversity Action Plans.

Policy GE4: Tree Protection confirms that:

Development proposals will be positively considered provided:

- a) there is no unacceptable loss of, or damage to, existing trees or woodlands during or as a result of development, any loss should be supported by a tree survey.
- b) trees not to be retained as a result of the development are replaced within with new trees as part of a well-designed landscape scheme.
- c) existing trees worthy of retention are sympathetically incorporated into the overall design of the scheme including all necessary measures taken to ensure their continued protection and survival during construction.

Policy H3: Provision of New Housing confirms that:

1. New residential development, including opportunities for self-build homes and starter homes, must provide a high quality residential environment which assists in delivering urban regeneration or contributes to creating sustainable communities and which overall enhances the built environment.
2. In addition, opportunities to provide self-build homes and starter homes will be considered acceptable as part of limited infill within existing ribbon developments within the Green Belt where it is demonstrated that they do not have an adverse impact upon the openness and integrity of the wider Green Belt.
3. A suitable residential environment will include safe and appropriate access, have adequate amenity space and parking provision and be safe from environmental pollutants such as land contamination, excessive noise and air quality issues.
4. Wherever possible new developments should also be within:
 - a) 2km radius of local medical services;
 - b) 1.5km of a designated centre within the city hierarchy (policy R3) ;
 - c) 1km radius of a primary school;
 - d) 1km of indoor and **outdoor sports facilities**; and
 - e) 400m of a bus stop
 - f) 400m of **publicly accessible green space**.
5. Proposals should also be in conformity with all other relevant plan policies.

6. Sustainable transport provision and the infrastructure required to support housing development must be considered from the onset, to ensure all sites have easy access to high quality public transport and walking and cycling routes.
7. The delivery of self-build homes will be supported where they meet the criteria of this policy.

Coventry Health & Wellbeing Strategy, 2016 – 2019

This strategy is the city's overarching plan for reducing health inequalities and improving health and wellbeing outcomes for Coventry residents. It sets out our three year vision for health and wellbeing, and the strategic priorities which have been identified to support this vision.

The strategy for 2016-2019 focuses on three priorities in order to make a difference to the lives of Coventry people. These are as follows:

- Working together as a Marmot City to reduce health and wellbeing inequalities.
- Improving the health and wellbeing of individuals with multiple complex needs.
- Developing an integrated health and care system that provides the right help and support to enable people to live their lives well.

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy will be refreshed in 2019 and supported by a move to a place based Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

Further work has also been carried out through Health Protection Strategy – Air Quality workstreams and the potential to link active travel plans to parks and green spaces.

Coventry: A Marmot City (Coventry Health & Wellbeing), 2016 – 2019

Coventry became a Marmot City in 2013. Being a Marmot City has brought together partners from different parts of Coventry City Council and from other public sector and voluntary organisations, whose decisions and activities have an impact on health. The Marmot principles aim to reduce inequality and improve health outcomes for all.

The Marmot strategy summary is depicted in the pictogram below:



Coventry Sports Strategy, 2014 – 2024

The Sports Strategy outlines the vision and the strategic rationale for continued investment in sport within the city. The mission as set out in this strategy is "To develop a more active, inclusive and vibrant Coventry through positive experiences through sport".

The vision aims are:

1. To inspire more people in the city to take up and regularly take part in sport.
2. To provide a wide range of high quality and exciting sporting opportunities and experiences.
3. To inspire more people to volunteer, coach and be facilitators of sport.
4. To identify and support talented athletes to reach their sporting potential.
5. To provide a range of modern, accessible and high quality sports facilities.
6. To attract high profile sporting events to the city and to celebrate sporting achievement.
7. To grow and promote sport in the city through effective partnerships.
8. For sport to make Coventry a better place to live, work and visit.

Over the last ten years, more than £28 million has been invested in improving sports and leisure facilities in the city, including the opening of the Alan Higgs Centre, the Moat House Leisure and Neighbourhood Centre and the Xcel Leisure Centre. Improvements in parks and open spaces, represents a further £1.2 million worth of investment and this has included the tennis courts at the War Memorial Park and pitch and changing provision at both the War Memorial Park and Holbrooks Park.

Coventry Playing Pitch Strategy (2018 Refresh)

The Coventry Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan (PPS) provides a clear, strategic framework for the protection, maintenance, and improvement of existing playing pitches and ancillary facilities, and the investment in new playing pitches and ancillary facilities.

This Strategy is developed from research and analysis of playing pitch provision and usage in Coventry and it provides:

- A vision for the future improvement and prioritisation of playing pitches (including ancillary facilities).

- A series of generic management objectives which provide a strategic framework for the improvement, maintenance, development and, as appropriate, rationalisation of the playing pitch stock.
- A series of sport by sport objectives which provide a strategic framework for sport led improvements to provision.
- A prioritised area-by-area action plan (where action is deemed necessary to maintain or improve quality).

The study assesses current and future needs and demands for playing pitches, seeks to protect enhance and improve existing playing pitch stock, provides an evidence base to update planning policy to ensure adequate provision in relation to new housing developments., informs planning applications that affect the loss of pitches and outdoor sports facilities, provides an evidence base to support future funding bids and improve community access to educational and privately owned pitches.

The PPS sits within the context of an eight-point Sports Vision for Coventry. The following aims for the PPS are set out:

- To address quantitative deficiencies to meet existing and future demand – by rectifying shortfalls through improvements to current pitch stock and establish a framework to inform planning application negotiations that involve the loss of playing fields.
- To address issues of quality and management with regard to facility provision – by addressing overplayed sites and adopting a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) to the management and improvement of sites.
- To maximise access to all outdoor facilities and in particular increase access to educational facilities.
- To maximise investment into playing pitches and ancillary facilities.

A tiered model approach to the management of sports facilities was developed and includes the following tiered site criteria:

- Strategic sites - hub sites that bring financial, social and sporting benefits. Initial investment could be required in the short term and identified in the Action Plan.
- Key centres - football venues catering for both senior and youth matches; such as Eastern Green Recreational Ground. Some financial investment is necessary to

improve the ancillary facilities to complement the pitches in terms of access, flexibility and quality. They should be designated as medium priority for investment.

- Club/education sites - sites which are hired to clubs for a season or leased on a long term basis; such as Chace Avenue and Coventry Blue Coat School. Pitch improvements in most cases relate to installation and / or improving drainage works on sites.
- Reserve sites - could be used for summer matches/competitions, training or informal play. They could be single-pitch sites with limited usage, or have no recognised current usage.

The site by site action plan seeks to address key issues identified in the assessment report and provides recommendations based on current levels of usage, quality and future demand and the potential of each site for enhancement. The action plan in the document is to be delivered over a ten year period, however, the strategy and action plan recommends a number of priority projects for Coventry, to be implemented.



4 Current Green Space Provision

4.1 Approach and methodology

An assessment of the quantity, quality and accessibility of green space in Coventry has been carried out to inform the development of this Strategy. The initial 'audit' stage followed the guidance set out in PPG17 : Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation and the companion guide : Assessing Needs and Opportunities.

Through the green space audit, the 2008 Green Space Strategy mapping dataset has been reviewed and significantly updated. The 2008 dataset was found to only be a partial dataset that recorded green space with unrestricted access and predominantly those spaces in Coventry City Council ownership. A number of spaces have also been lost to development over the ten years since the previous strategy. In addition, the Council has also gained green space through development, acquisition and other redevelopment.

The revised green space dataset has been updated with reference to mapping data from other providers such as Whitefriars Housing, Ordnance Survey Open Greenspace mapping and using other datasets held by the Council. The dataset has been reviewed and rationalised by Council Parks staff and has been cross checked on the ground by the quality assessment process.

A green space typology as set out in the table below has been used to classify all types of green space according to their primary purpose. The strategy recognises that green spaces are multi-functional but a single classification according to the primary purpose has been used to ensure consistency and that spaces are only recorded once. The green space typology is set out in the table below.

Level 1 Typology	Primary Purpose	Coventry Local Plan Designation
Parks and gardens	Includes urban parks, formal gardens and ornamental areas offering accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events.	Formal
Natural and semi-natural green spaces	Includes country parks, publicly accessible woodlands, urban forestry, grasslands, commons and wetlands for wildlife conservation, bio-diversity and environmental education and awareness.	Informal
Green Corridors	Linear routes such as river banks and corridors, towpaths, cycle routes and other connected routes for walking, cycling or	Informal

Level 1 Typology	Primary Purpose	Coventry Local Plan Designation
	horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel, and opportunities for wildlife migration.	
Outdoor sports facilities	Natural and artificial surfaces for sport and recreation offering opportunities for participation in outdoor sports, pitch sports, tennis, bowls, athletics or countryside and water sports. Includes school playing fields and golf courses.	Formal
Amenity green space	Informal green space often found in housing areas or adjacent to highways providing opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas.	Informal
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. Play spaces often form part of a larger spaces, such as parks and gardens, which may be used to designate the primary purpose. All play spaces have also been recorded on a separate mapping layer.	Formal
Allotments and Community Gardens	Designated areas offering 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. Excludes private gardens.	Functional
Cemeteries and Churchyards	Cemeteries, churchyards and crematoria grounds providing quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity. Also includes closed burial grounds used for informal recreation.	Functional

Table 2 Green space typology

All green spaces have also been classified according to their significance in a hierarchy. The hierarchy is applied across all green space types.

Hierarchy level	Description
City	The most significant green spaces acting as destination spaces and attracting visitors from across the city. War Memorial Park and Coombe Country Park are the two city wide green spaces.
District	Those sites whose significance should attract people from up to 1200 metres. Usually large sites with a range of facilities or designated importance for history or nature conservation.
Neighbourhood	Those sites which perform a function that serves a more immediate community. Unlikely to attract people from across the city but may draw people from up to 800 metres.
Local	Those sites which serve just the local area, up to 400m – typically areas of amenity green space.

Table 3 Green space hierarchy

All green spaces have been classified according to their level of public accessibility.

Accessibility Level	Description
Unrestricted	Sites have unrestricted public access although some sites may have limitations to access between dusk and dawn.
Limited	Sites may be publicly or privately owned but access is limited either by a physical barrier such as membership, or psychological barrier such as a feeling that an open space is private.
Not accessible	Sites are out of bounds to the general public.

Table 4 Green space accessibility

The classifications relating to type, hierarchy and accessibility along with site boundaries have been checked through the quality assessment process.

A computer based Geographical Information System has been used to manage the mapping dataset and associated metadata. This will allow the dataset to be reviewed and updated in the future.

4.2 Quantity

The data capture process initially recorded 747 spaces totalling 2002 hectares. This process included the recording of some very small spaces and parcels of land. The green space dataset has been revised to only include those spaces greater than 0.1 hectares in order to provide a logical minimum size threshold and to ensure greater consistency in the data. The analysis below looks at all green spaces greater than this minimum threshold of 0.1 hectares.

Green space type	No. of spaces	Area (ha)	Proportion of all green space by area
Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace	65	634.7	31.8%
Outdoor Sports Facilities	150	598.0	29.9%
Amenity Greenspace	306	293.4	14.7%
Parks and Gardens	33	223.5	11.2%
Green Corridor	29	107.7	5.4%
Allotments	54	98.5	4.9%
Cemeteries and Churchyards	13	41.1	2.1%
Total	650	1997.0	100.0%

Table 5 Green space supply by type

A total of 650 green spaces have been recorded totalling nearly 2000 hectares. Despite the urban nature of the city, natural and semi-natural green space, totalling nearly 635 hectares, accounts for nearly one third of all green space. This includes green spaces within the city and some spaces, such as Coombe Country Park, located just outside the city boundary. Outdoor sports facilities contribute nearly 600 hectares and make up nearly 30% of the total supply of green space by area. A large number of small amenity green spaces cover nearly 300 hectares and contribute nearly 15% of the total area. Parks and Gardens are fewer in number but tend to be larger spaces with 33 sites covering over 223 ha and contributing 11.1% of the area of green space. Green corridors, typically along the River Sowe and other linear routes cover over 100 ha and make up over 5% of all greenspace in the city. More specialised provision in the form of allotments and cemeteries and churchyards make up less than 8% of the total area of green space.

Figure 1 shows all recorded green spaces over 0.1 hectares classified by green space type and public accessibility.

Coventry Green Space Audit

Figure 1
All Green Space over
0.1 ha

LEGEND

- Allotments
- Amenity Green Space
- Churchyards and Cemeteries
- Green Corridor
- Natural and Semi-natural Green Space
- Outdoor Sports Facilities
- Parks and Gardens

Public Access

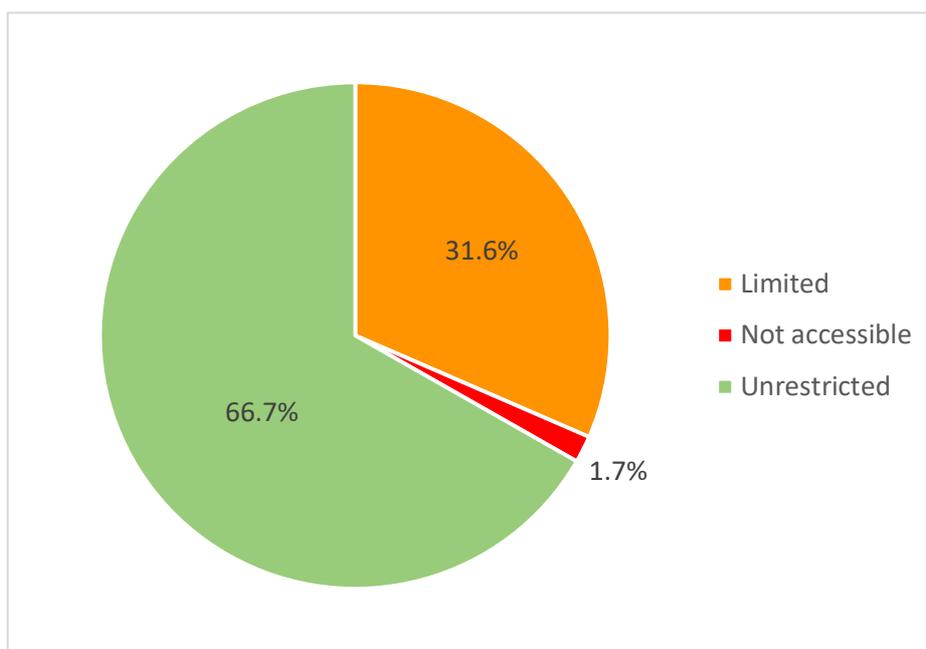
- Unrestricted
- Limited
- Not Accessible

Wards_2004

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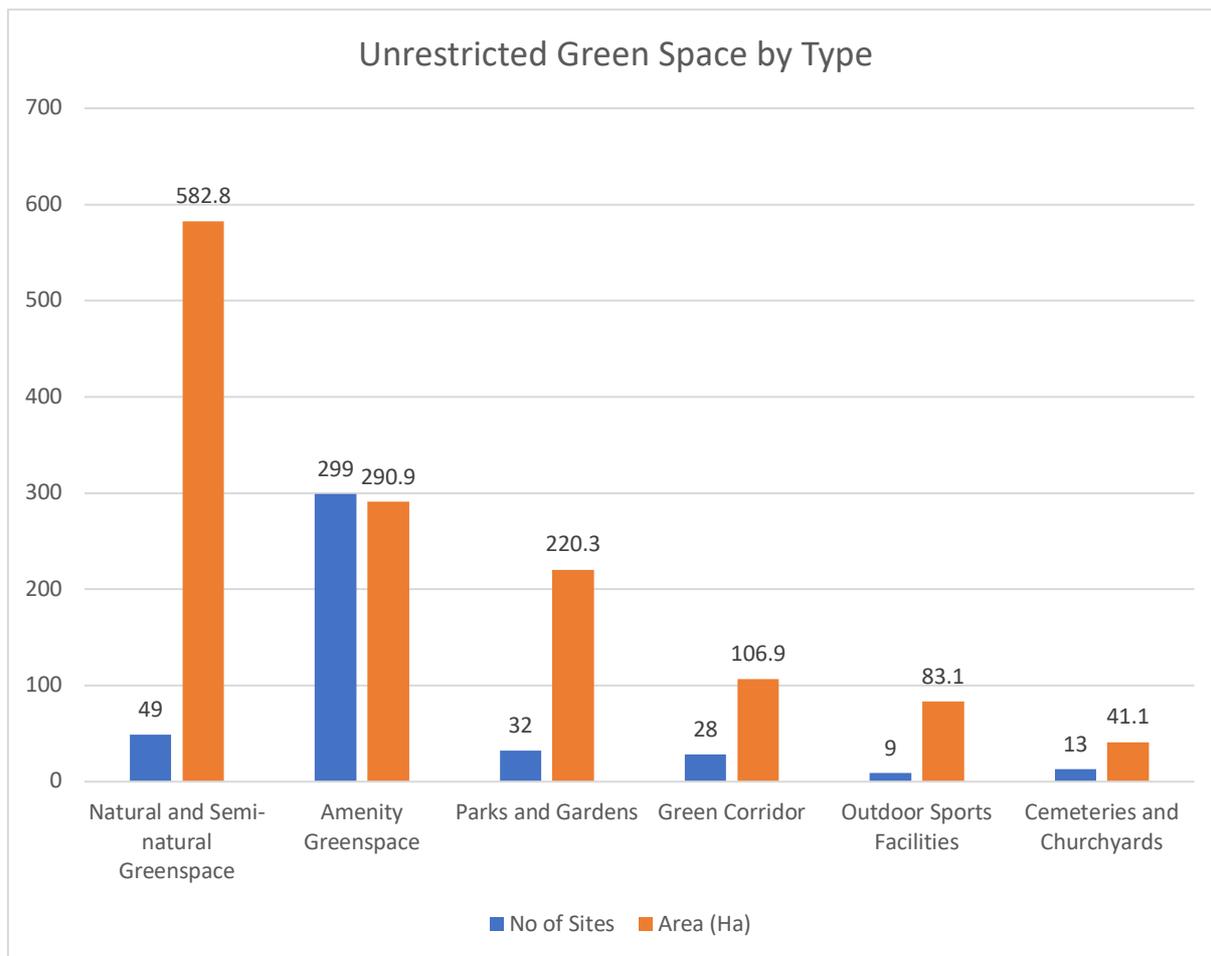


In terms of accessibility, under 2% of recorded green spaces have no public access, nearly one third (31.6%) have some form of access restriction. These spaces tend to be sports clubs, allotments, or school grounds which have access only to those people associated with the club or organisation. Two thirds of the green spaces across the city (430 green spaces) have unrestricted access.

Green space type	No. of spaces	Area (ha)	Proportion of all green space by area
Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace	49	582.8	44.0%
Amenity Greenspace	299	290.9	22.0%
Parks and Gardens	32	220.3	16.6%
Green Corridor	28	106.9	8.1%
Outdoor Sports Facilities	9	83.1	6.3%
Cemeteries and Churchyards	13	41.1	3.1%
Total	430	1325.2	100.0%

Table 6 Unrestricted green space provision

When unrestricted green spaces are considered, natural and semi-natural green spaces remain the predominant green space type, covering nearly 600 ha and making up 44% of the total area.



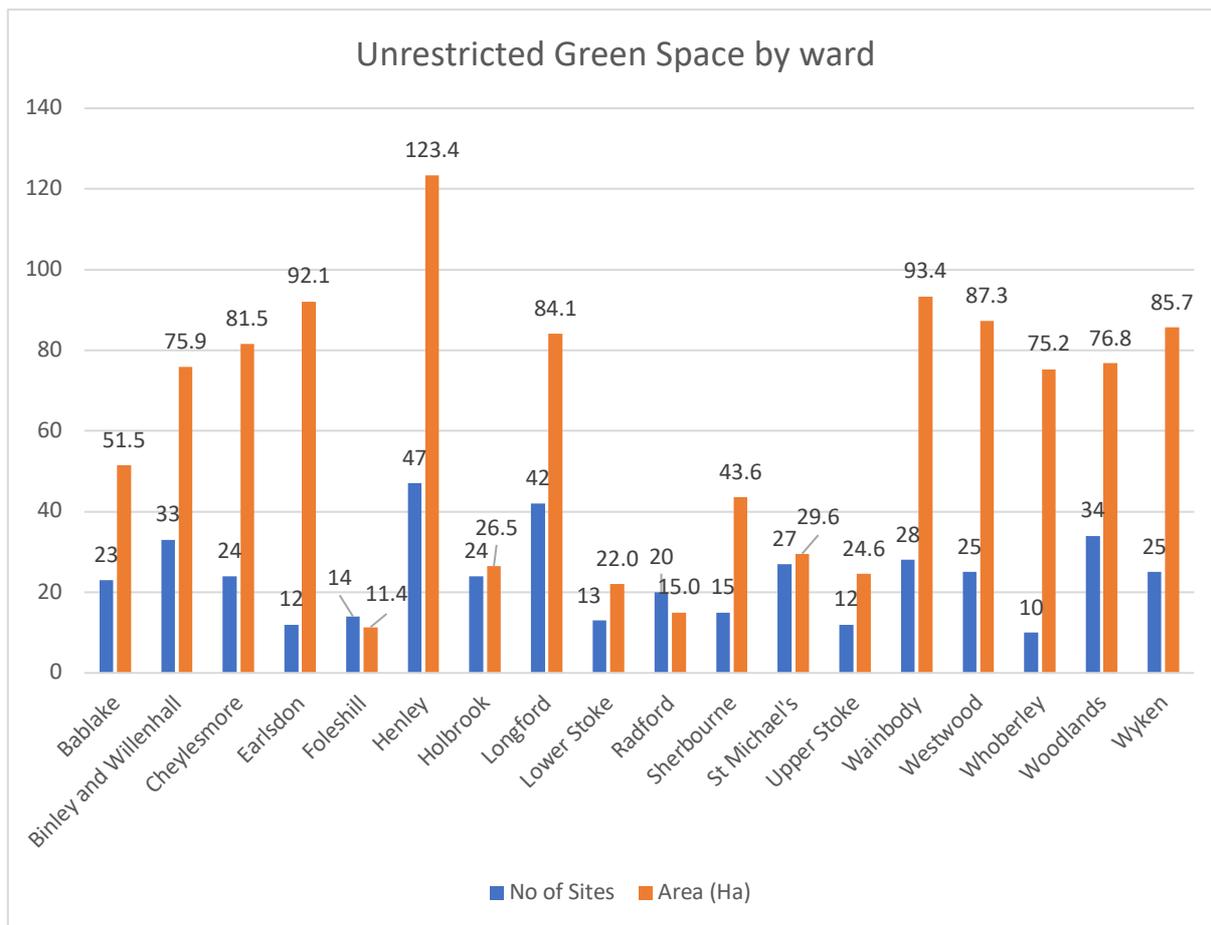
Amenity green spaces typically have unrestricted access and make up 22% of all unrestricted green space. Parks and gardens are significant providing over 220 hectares and making up over 16% of all unrestricted green space. Outdoor Sports Facilities often have some form of access restriction and the number of unrestricted spaces is relatively low at just 9 sites making up 83 hectares and 6% of the total area. Although 28 out of 29 Green Corridors are described as accessible, there is considerable scope for access improvements along these corridors including the River Sherbourne. Due to restricted access, some do not fully function as “corridors” with access at both ends e.g. The Sherbourne corridor from the London Road to Charterhouse. As discussed later in this strategy, a Living Landscapes project is being developed for the River Sherbourne in partnership with the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and if funding is secured could make significant improvements to the accessibility (and quality) of green spaces along this corridor.

Hierarchy	No. of spaces	Area (ha)	Proportion of all green space by area
City	2	246.6	18.6%
District	11	225.0	17.0%
Neighbourhood	27	160.6	12.1%
Local	390	693.0	52.3%
Total	430	1325.2	100.0%

Table 7 Green space hierarchy and accessibility thresholds

In terms of the significance of the city's green spaces the revised hierarchy shows that the two 'City' spaces (War Memorial Park and Coombe Country Park) cover a significant area amounting to nearly 250 ha, equivalent to 18.6% of the total area of unrestricted green space. Eleven 'District' spaces cover a similar area and contribute 17.0% by area. 27 'Neighbourhood' spaces cover nearly 161 hectares and contribute 12.1% of the total area. A total of 390 'Local' level spaces make up over 52% of the total supply of unrestricted green space.

However, there is considerable variation in the amount of green space by ward across the city. Residents of Henley and Wainbody wards enjoy access to over 100 hectares of green space, whereas those living in Upper Stoke, Lower Stoke, Radford and Foleshill wards have access to levels of provision significantly below the ward average of 62.3 hectares.



The table below shows the level of provision of unrestricted green space by ward linked to the population.

ward	Area (ha)	Population (2017 MYE)	Area / 1000 pop
Bablake	51.5	16,581	3.11
Binley and Willenhall	75.9	17,582	4.32
Cheylesmore	81.5	17,870	4.56
Earlsdon	92.1	16,368	5.63
Foleshill	11.4	22,723	0.50
Henley	123.4	20,499	6.02
Holbrook	26.5	19,311	1.37
Longford	84.1	19,879	4.23
Lower Stoke	22.0	23,386	0.94
Radford	15.0	21,503	0.70
Sherbourne	43.6	18,491	2.36
St Michael's	29.6	34,448	0.86
Upper Stoke	24.6	20,723	1.19
Wainbody	93.4	15,698	5.95
Westwood	87.3	21,032	4.15
Whoberley	75.2	17,802	4.23
Woodlands	76.8	18,489	4.15
Wyken	85.7	17,764	4.82
Total	1099.4	360,149	3.05

Table 8 Green space quantity by ward

NB : The total area is lower than shown in Tables 5 & 6 since those sites located outside the city boundary (and therefore not assigned to a ward) have been excluded.

Overall, across the city, the average level of provision is 3.05 hectares per 1,000 population (based on 2017 Mid-Year Estimates for ward population). As shown in the table below this is below the level of provision of many other local authority areas in the West Midlands Region.

Local Authority	Hectares of unrestricted green space per 1000 population
Nuneaton and Bedworth (2011)	2.06 hectares per 1000
Coventry City Council (2018)	3.05 hectares per 1000
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (2018)	3.63 hectares per 1000
Wolverhampton City Council (2014)	4.43 hectares per 1000
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council (2009)	4.51 hectares per 1000
Walsall Council (2012)	4.96 hectares per 1000
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (2014)	5.00 hectares per 1000
Warwick District Council (2012)	5.47 hectares per 1000
Stoke-on-Trent City Council (2007)	6.60 hectares per 1000
North Warwickshire District Council (2008)	Approx. 1.2 hectares per 1000
Rugby Borough Council (2014)	Approx. 2.29 hectares per 1000

Table 9 Quantity of provision in other local authority areas

However, here is significant variation in the quantity of provision by ward. Henley ward has the greatest level of provision at 6.02 hectares per 1,000 population and Foleshill the lowest at 0.50 hectares per 1,000 population.

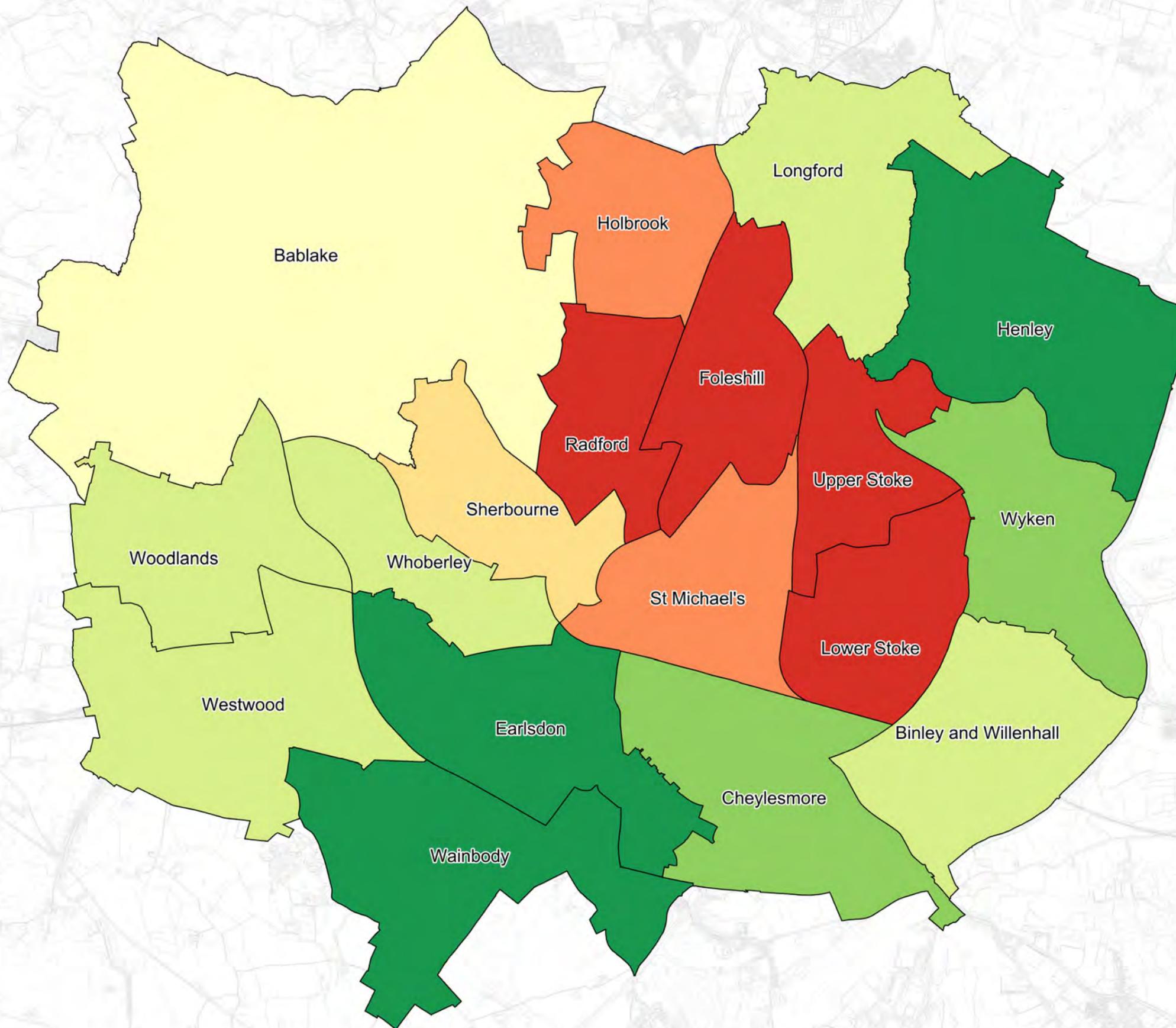
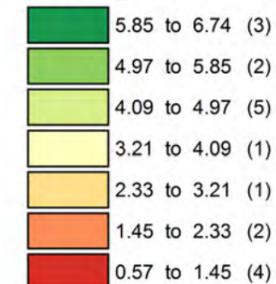
Figure 2 shows the quantity of space by ward presented as a thematic map.

Considering green space provision by type across each ward there is even greater variation as shown in the summary table below.

Coventry Green Space Audit

Figure 2
Quantity of Green Space per 1000 population by Ward

LEGEND



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ward	Parks and Gardens	Amenity Greenspace	Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace	Green Corridor	Outdoor Sports Facilities (Unrestricted)	Outdoor Sports Facilities (All)	Allotments	Cemeteries and Churchyards
Bablake	0.00	0.46	0.52	0.00	2.13	7.18	0.87	0.00
Binley and Willenhall	0.00	1.39	1.83	0.72	0.38	4.28	0.00	0.00
Cheylesmore	0.17	1.78	1.56	0.59	0.00	1.74	0.81	0.46
Earlsdon	3.46	0.51	1.65	0.00	0.00	2.40	0.53	0.00
Foleshill	0.31	0.11	0.02	0.00	0.04	0.25	0.07	0.01
Henley	0.44	1.65	1.91	0.99	0.82	2.23	0.17	0.22
Holbrook	0.63	0.38	0.14	0.00	0.00	0.84	0.16	0.22
Longford	1.36	1.08	1.02	0.58	0.00	0.61	0.25	0.19
Lower Stoke	0.22	0.46	0.02	0.24	0.00	0.64	0.02	0.00
Radford	0.27	0.43	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.49	0.01	0.00
Sherbourne	1.74	0.25	0.36	0.01	0.00	0.79	0.88	0.00
St Michael's	0.44	0.81	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.28	0.01	0.35
Upper Stoke	0.09	0.38	0.00	0.16	0.49	0.90	0.51	0.07
Wainbody	0.00	1.88	3.36	0.00	0.00	3.13	0.00	0.71
Westwood	0.18	1.21	2.30	0.00	0.46	1.76	0.08	0.00
Whoberley	2.06	1.41	0.46	0.29	0.00	0.26	0.39	0.00
Woodlands	0.10	0.83	3.01	0.00	0.21	1.90	0.08	0.00
Wyken	0.56	0.59	1.50	2.12	0.00	2.28	0.25	0.07
Total / Average	0.61	0.81	0.99	0.30	0.23	1.61	0.26	0.11

Table 10 Green space quantity by (primary) type and ward

4.3 Accessibility

In order to model the accessibility of green space across Coventry a model has been prepared linked to the green space hierarchy. The suggested distance thresholds for each level of the hierarchy are shown below.

Hierarchy level	Distance Threshold	Indicative Travel Time	
		Walk	Drive
City	2000 metres	30-45 mins	<20 mins
District	1200 metres	15-20 mins	<15 mins
Neighbourhood	800 metres	10-15 mins	<10 mins
Local	400 metres	5-10 mins	<5 mins

Table 11 Distance thresholds by hierarchy

Figure 3 shows the accessibility of District / Neighbourhood / Local level unrestricted green spaces, plotted at 1200 m / 800 m / 400m respectively. Based on this model most of the city has access to unrestricted green space of some form.

Figure 4 shows access to unrestricted green spaces where all spaces are plotted with a 400 metre buffer. This is inline with the policies set out in recommendation H3 of the Coventry Local Plan where all residents are expected to have access to a green space with 400 metres. Under this model most areas of Coventry have access to a green space at a local level although there are gaps in provision in Cheylesmore, Earlsdon, Foleshill, Lower Stoke, Sherbourne, Upper Stoke, Whoberley, Woodlands and Wyken wards.

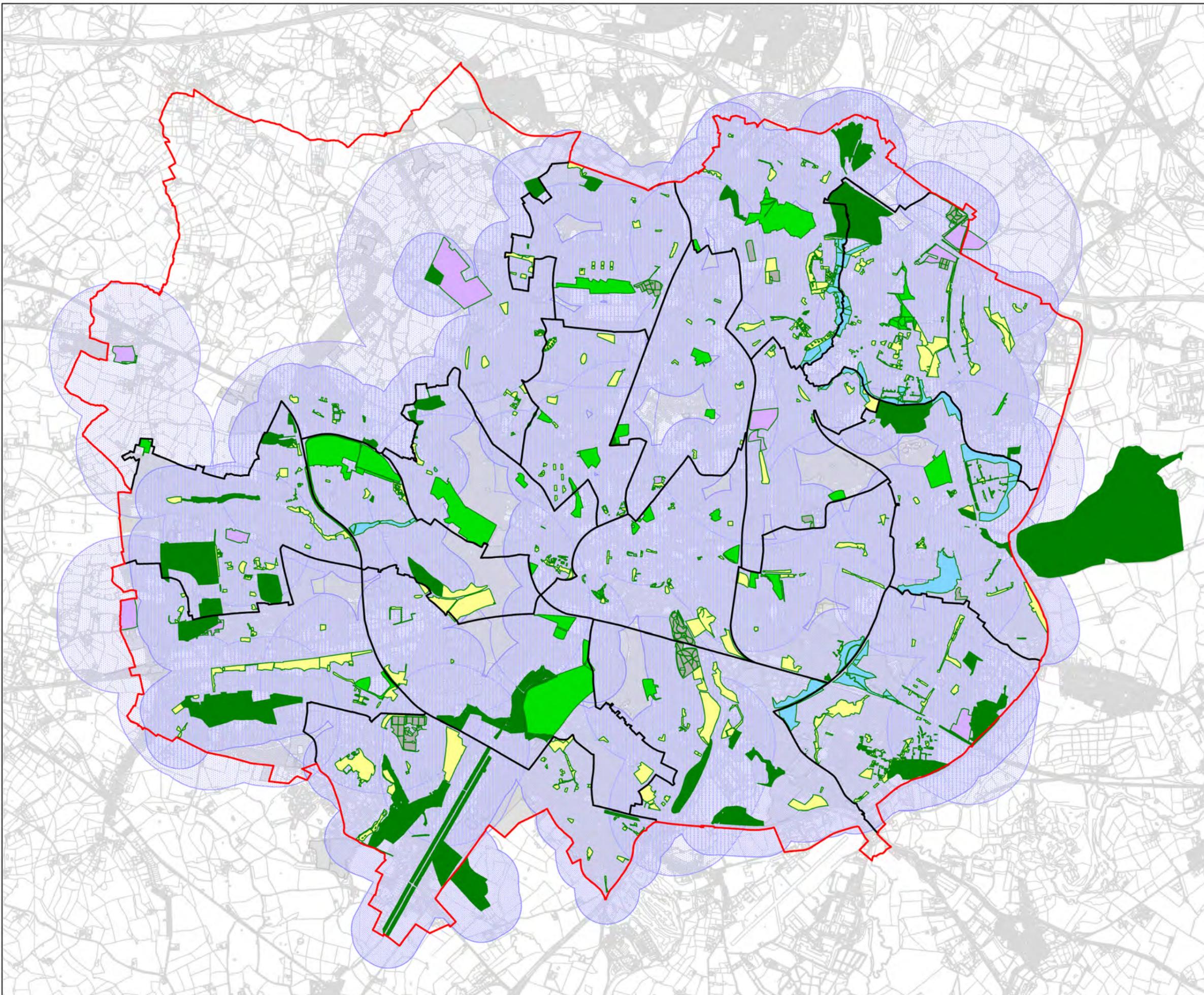
The Coventry Local Plan suggests that (Indoor and) Outdoor Sports should be accessible to residents within 1000m. Figure 5 shows that against this measure all areas of the city have access to some form of Outdoor Sports facility within this distance. This plan shows all Outdoor Sports facilities including those with limited access (i.e the sites are institutional land or require membership). If only those Outdoor Sports Facilities with unrestricted access are considered there are significant gaps across the city with Cheylesmore, Earlsdon, Lower Stoke, Wainbody and Whoberley wards having no access to such provision. Significant parts of the other wards within the city lack access to unrestricted Outdoor Sports Facilities.

4.4 *Proposed Local Standards*

Informed by the analysis of the quantity, accessibility and quality (discussed in the next section) a series of Local Standards are proposed for each green space type. This is set out in tabular form in Appendix A.

Coventry Green Space Audit

Figure 3
District, Neighbourhood and Local Green Spaces



LEGEND

Unrestricted green space

- Amenity green space
- Natural & semi-natural
- Green Corridors
- Cemeteries & churchyards
- Outdoor sports
- Parks and Gardens

Accessibility

- Local @ 400m
- Neighbourhood @ 800m
- District @ 1200m

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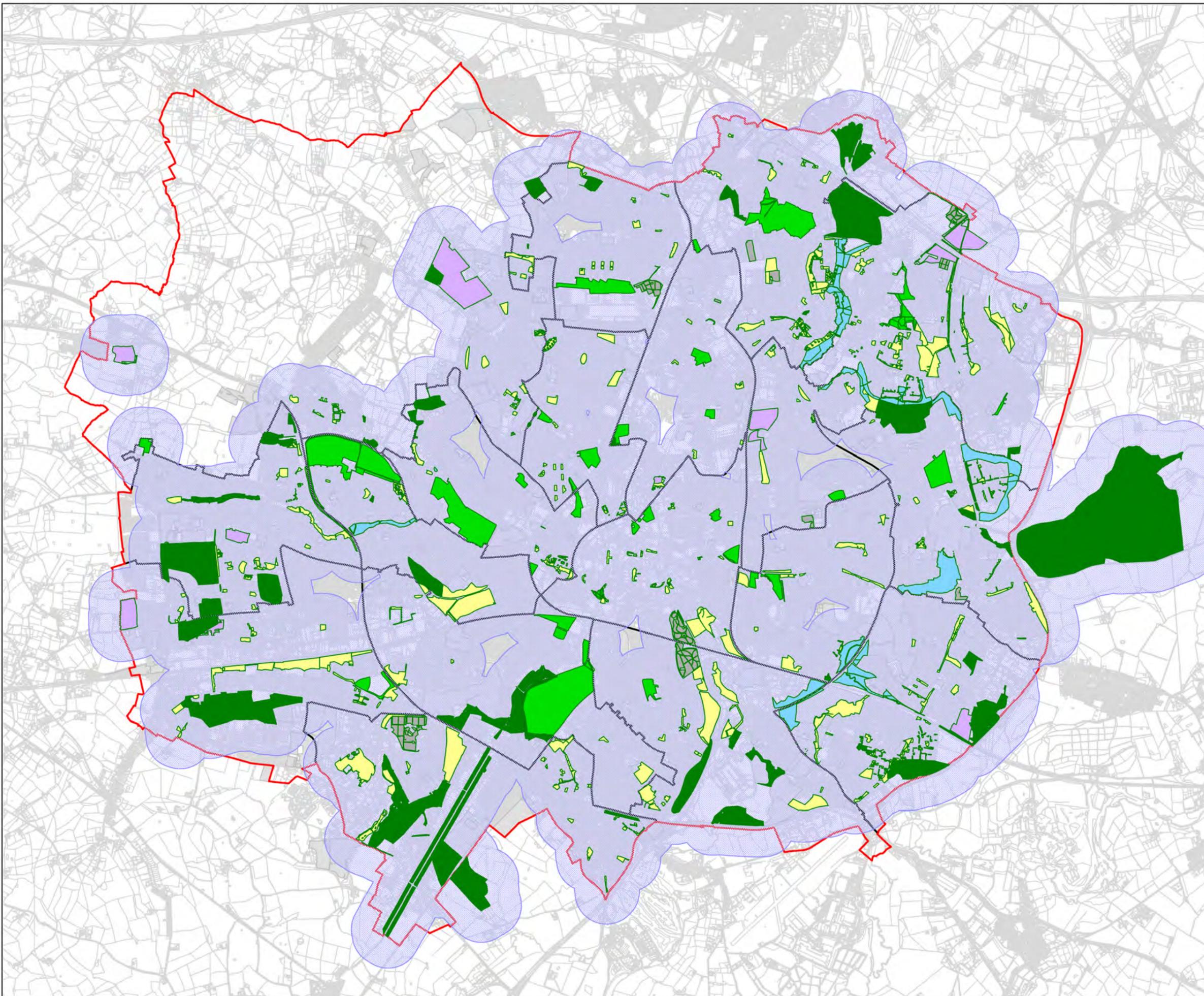
Coventry Green Space Audit

Figure 4
All Unrestricted Green Space at 400m

LEGEND

Unrestricted green space

- Amenity green space
- Natural & semi-natural
- Green Corridors
- Cemeteries & churchyards
- Outdoor sports
- Parks and Gardens
- All Green Space @ 400m



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Coventry Green Space Audit

Figure 5
All Outdoor Sports
Facilities with 1000m
Buffer

LEGEND

- Unrestricted green space
- Amenity green space
- Natural & semi-natural
- Green Corridors
- Cemeteries & churchyards
- Outdoor sports
- Parks and Gardens
- Outdoor Sports Facilities @ 1000m



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4.5 Quality

4.5.1 Methodology

A quality assessment of selected green spaces has been carried out to inform the development of the Green Space Strategy. A total of 223 spaces over 0.4 hectares were assessed against the criteria derived from the national standard for parks and green space quality, the Green Flag Award. Whilst the Green Flag Award contains both desk and field research, this audit was limited to site-based assessments; therefore, the final scores should not be read as the site's definitive score against the Green Flag Award but will give an indication of the relative quality of the green spaces assessed. The key criteria for the Green Flag Award are shown below;

- A welcoming place
- Healthy, safe and secure
- Clean and well maintained
- Environmental management
- Biodiversity, landscape and heritage
- Community involvement
- Marketing
- Management

Under these eight key criteria are 27 field assessment criteria. Of these 18 can be judged on site without reference to a Management Plan or other documentation, and are listed below;

A Welcoming Park

- Welcoming
- Good and safe access
- Signage
- Equal access for all

Healthy, Safe and Secure

- Appropriate levels of facilities and activities
- Safe equipment and facilities
- Personal security
- Control of dogs/fouling

Clean and Well Maintained

- Litter and waste management
- Horticultural maintenance
- Arboricultural maintenance

- Buildings and infrastructure maintenance
- Equipment maintenance

Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage

- Management of natural features, wild fauna and flora
- Conservation of landscape features
- Conservation of buildings and structures

Marketing

- Marketing and promotion
- Appropriate information channels
- Appropriate educational and interpretational information

Each criterion was scored on a scale of 0 to 10 and then an overall score out of 100 was calculated. As a guide, the pass mark for achieving the Green Flag Award is 66.

4.5.2 Quality Assessment Findings.

The average quality of the green spaces in Coventry that were assessed was 43.4 (out of 100). The scores ranged from just 5 to 89, showing considerable variation in the quality of spaces across the city. Figure 6 shows a plan of the sites assessed colour coded by quality score.

Greenspace Type	No. of spaces	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Average Score
Parks and Gardens	31	37	89	56.8
Cemeteries and Churchyards	8	35	66	52.8
Outdoor Sports Facilities	21	30	63	42.6
Amenity Greenspace	114	16	77	40.7
Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace	32	5	86	40.7
Green Corridor	17	20	53	39.2
Total / Average	223	5	89	43.4

Table 12 Quality score by green space type

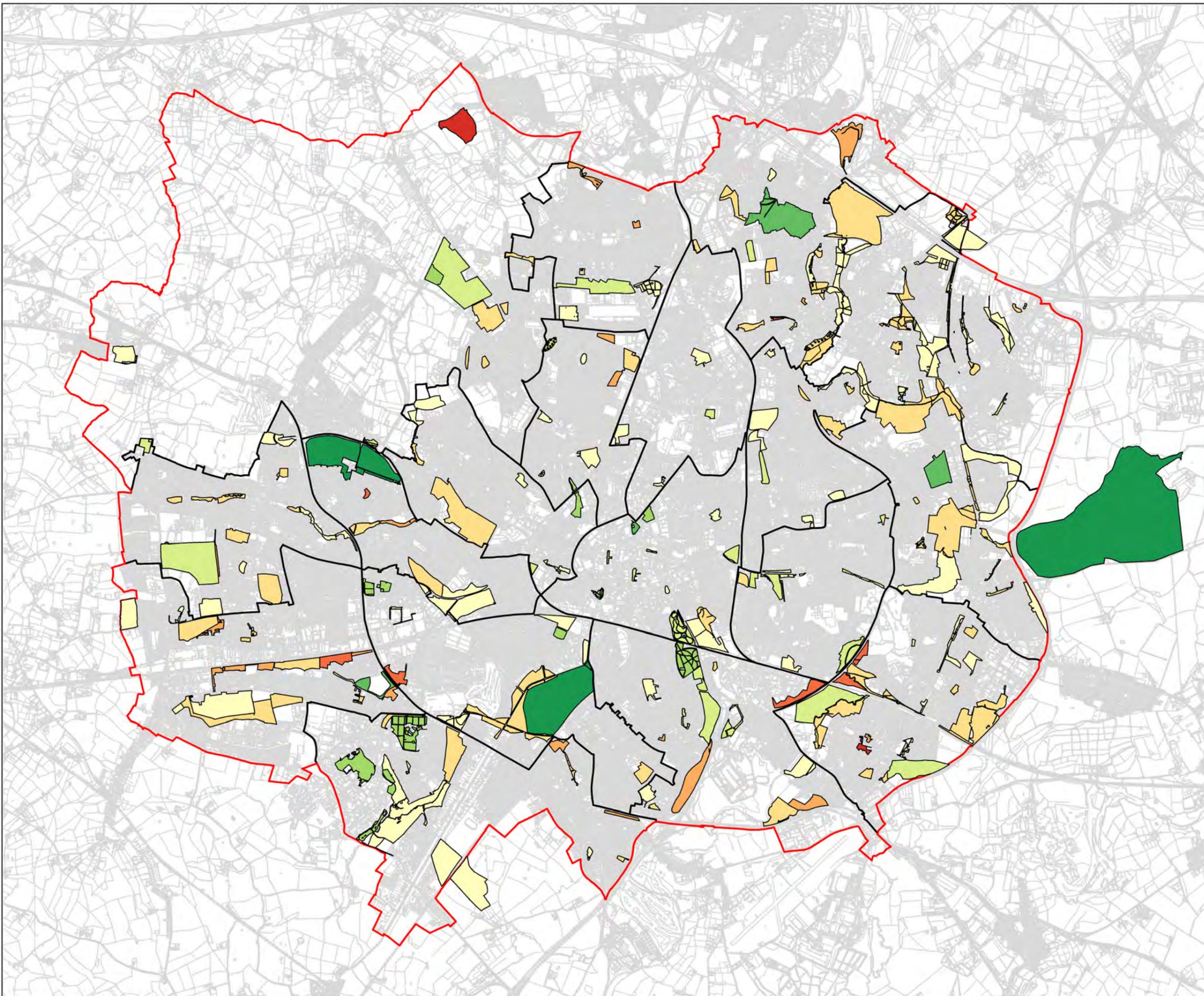
Parks and Gardens on average were the highest scoring type of green space, with an average score of 56.8. This category included War Memorial Park which was recorded as the highest quality green space in the city. War Memorial Park has benefitted from Heritage Lottery Funding and

Coventry Green Space Audit

Figure 6 Quality Score by Site

LEGEND

	79.4 to 89	(3)
	70.1 to 79.4	(5)
	60.8 to 70.1	(12)
	51.5 to 60.8	(22)
	42.2 to 51.5	(68)
	32.9 to 42.2	(85)
	23.6 to 32.9	(20)
	14.3 to 23.6	(6)
	5 to 14.3	(2)



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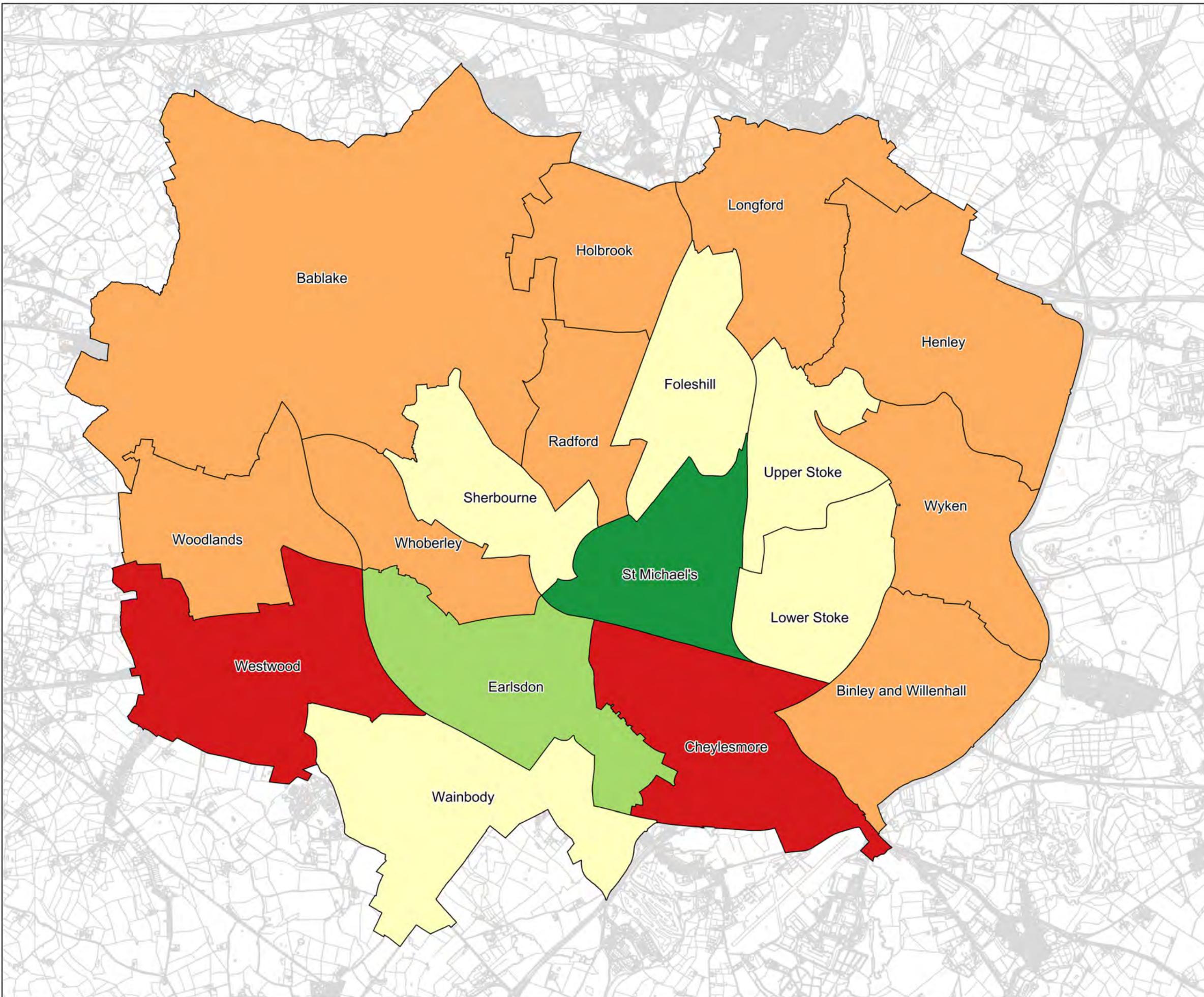
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Coventry Green Space Audit

Figure 7
Average Quality Score by Ward

LEGEND

	53.81 to 58.8 (1)
	48.81 to 53.8 (1)
	43.82 to 48.8 (5)
	38.81 to 43.81 (9)
	33.8 to 38.8 (2)



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investment by Coventry City Council (a total of £6.0 million) and has held the Green Flag Award since 2013.

Cemeteries and Churchyards typically scored well with an average quality score of 52.8. Such spaces, particularly active burial grounds tend to be maintained to a high standard and this was reflected in the scores recorded.

Outdoor sports facilities scored on average 42.6, marginally below the average for all green space of 43.4. A total of 110 Amenity Green Spaces were assessed with an average score of 40.7. Within this category some high scoring sites were recorded, notably the grounds of Coventry University and Warwick Universities and Wainbody Playing Fields. Coventry University Campus grounds have been awarded the Green Flag.

Natural and semi-natural green spaces exhibited the highest range of scores from 5 to 86 with an average score of 40.7. The highest scoring semi-natural green space was Coombe Country Park at 86, the second highest scoring site was Coundon Community Woodland. Green Corridors were the lowest scoring type of green space with an average score of 39.2.

Whilst the average scores for different types of green spaces show some differentiation it should be noted that there were high scoring examples in all types of green space.

The six top scoring spaces (War Memorial Park, Coombe Country Park, Allesley Hall Park, Longford Park, Caludon Castle Park and Coventry University Campus) all attained the Green Flag Award in 2017.

Figure 7 is a thematic map showing the findings of the quality assessment.

This distribution of scores appears to indicate fewer lower quality sites nearer the city centre, and a greater number of lower quality sites nearer the city boundary. This would not appear to be related to deprivation or affluence; the top 20 scoring sites are evenly distributed, from city centre sites (Lady Herbert's Garden, Coventry University and Swanswell Park) to peri-urban sites such as Coombe Country Park, Allesley Hall Park and Coundon Community Woodland. Rather, it would appear to relate to the nature of the sites themselves. Those nearer the city centre tend to be smaller, more formal or historic spaces constrained by a denser urban fabric, and as a result have higher levels of facilities and maintenance with consequently higher scores. There is a high proportion of sites in the typology Parks and Gardens near the city centre, which as **Table 12** shows, is the highest scoring green space type. Further from the city centre is a higher proportion of sites in the typology Natural and Semi-natural Green Space, which generally have fewer facilities and

lower levels of maintenance and management, which is reflected in this typology having lower average scores.

Hierarchy	No. of spaces	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Average Score
City	2	86	89	87.5
District	12	35	84	57.5
Neighbourhood	33	28	68	46.4
Local	176	5	77	41.4
Total / Average	223	5	89	43.4

Table 13 Quality Score by Hierarchy

The quality assessment found that green spaces higher in the hierarchy typically scored better than those lower down. The two City level spaces scored very highly and averaged 87.5. District level spaces scored on average 57.5, higher than Neighbourhood level spaces at 46.4 and Local Level spaces at 41.4. This reflects previous investment by the City Council and other providers in higher level spaces rather than those at a local level.

4.5.3 Friends Groups

Sixteen sites that were assessed had voluntary groups associated with them and **Table 7** shows the effect that this has had on the scores. Overall, those green spaces with Friends groups achieved significantly higher scores (15 percentage points higher) than those without a similar group. This sample would suggest that Friends groups are an effective mechanism to help improve the quality of green spaces.

Voluntary Group	Average Quality Score
Yes	57
No	42

Table 14 Average quality score & voluntary group

4.5.4 Geographical Variation in Quality

Table 16 below shows the variation in average quality score by ward.

ward	No. of spaces	Average Quality Score
St Michael's	13	58.2
Earlsdon	10	50.3
Foleshill	4	47.8
Sherbourne	8	47.1
Wainbody	13	46.8
Lower Stoke	9	45.1
Upper Stoke	10	44.8
Average	221*	43.4
Henley	21	42.9
Wyken	14	42.6
Whoberley	6	42.3
Woodlands	15	41.9
Radford	8	41.1
Bablake	9	40.9
Binley and Willenhall	20	40.0
Holbrook	10	39.7
Longford	21	39.6
Westwood	17	38.5
Cheylesmore	13	38.1

Table 15 Average quality score by ward

NB : 2 sites assessed are outside the city boundary and therefore not associated with a ward.

Whilst there is some variation at a ward level, with St Michael's and Earlsdon topping the table, and five other wards scoring higher than average, the key factors in determining green space quality tend to be hierarchy, and green space type, rather than geography. Interestingly, Foleshill ward which has relatively little green space and exhibits high levels of deprivation, has the third highest average quality score at ward level.

4.6 Service Delivery

The table below sets out the average quality score by criteria. These provide some indication of the relative quality of service delivery and any issues observed on site.

Rank	Criteria	Average Quality Score
1	Control of dogs/fouling	7.9
2	Personal security	6.4
3	Litter and waste management	6.3
4	Equipment maintenance	6.1
5	Conservation of buildings and structures	6.0
6	Good and safe access	5.6
7	Welcoming	5.5
8	Safe equipment and facilities	5.3
9	Equal access for all	5.0
10	Buildings and infrastructure maintenance	4.6
AVERAGE CRITERIA SCORE		4.5
11	Appropriate levels of facilities and activities	4.3
12	Appropriate provision for the community	3.9
13	Arboricultural maintenance	3.8
14	Horticultural maintenance	3.6
15	Management of natural features, wild flora and fauna	3.1
16	Signage	2.7
17	Appropriate educational and interpretational information	0.7
18	Conservation of landscape features	0.4

Table 16 Quality score by criteria

Generally, sites scored highly against criteria relating to levels of control of dogs and fouling, litter and waste management, personal security, and equipment maintenance. The high scores relating to control of dogs and fouling may be attributed to a general behavioural shift towards more responsible dog ownership; most sites had very little evidence of dog fouling or issues with dog behaviour and it appears that it is only a small number of sites where there is less control of dogs that has depressed the scores for this category. With respect to litter and waste management, there was a wider spread of scores for this category, but it was noticeable to the site auditor that there was a significant number of sites that were commendably clean and litter free, with the average score being depressed again by a small number of sites with extensive tipping. The litter and waste management scores were in some instances depressed because of localised littering resulting from high levels of use of facilities and equipment; it is probable that these sites would attract a higher score if visited on a different occasion. Personal security again shows a wide range of scores, and the higher average score may be attributed partly to the high levels of use of sites, as well as a large number of smaller sites, which benefit from good levels of overlooking from adjacent roads and dwellings.

The lowest criteria scores were achieved for signage, appropriate educational and interpretational information, and conservation of landscape features. Noticeably low scores across the city for these criteria may reflect the large sample size, with the inclusion of a large proportion of sites that are likely to have low levels of provision of facilities. Low scores for signage also reflect its general age and condition, with signage on many sites being limited to pre-1986 former West Midlands County Council signage, with in many instances only the sign posts and frames remaining.

All criteria scores are also likely to be depressed by the nature of the sites included for assessment. A number of exceptionally low scoring sites, for example Bunsons Wood (5 – privately owned), Windridge Close (9), Coundon Old Boys FC (11 - disused) and Burnsall Grove (16) appeared to be derelict, abandoned or outside of any maintenance regime and characterised by restricted access and extensive fly tipping, and as such are not in any way indicative of the quality of management and maintenance carried out by the Council.

5 Consultation and Community Needs

We have used a range of methods and tools to carry out consultation to inform the development of this Green Space Strategy.

- We have reviewed previous consultation related to parks, green spaces, public health and the wider natural environment
- We developed a questionnaire based Household Survey that was distributed to a random sample of 5,000 households across the city. This was also promoted through targeted mailing to parks and green space 'friends' and other community groups, sports clubs and to those on the Council's 'Heritage' mailing list. We also promoted this through the two universities mailing lists to reach the student population of the city. Further promotion was carried out via the organisation Positive Images to boost the number of responses from BAME communities. A total of 1244 responses were gained.
- Face to face meetings and stakeholder interviews were carried out with a range of Council Officers, local agencies, education sector and voluntary and third sector organisations.
- A presentation was made to the Coventry Green Space and Heritage Forum and the forum via the co-ordinator has been involved in discussions about the ongoing development of the strategy.
- Two stakeholder workshops were run during the initial phase of the development of the strategy to assist with developing a vision, aims and to highlight key issues.
- Two further stakeholder workshops were held to provide feedback on the findings of the research and to assist with prioritisation of draft recommendations.
- The Green Space and Heritage Forum reviewed and prioritised the draft recommendations of the strategy.
- The Council's Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee has also met throughout the development of the strategy to monitor progress and review the scope and findings of the strategy. Alongside this a Task and Finish Group has also been involved in the strategy development.

5.1 Summary of Consultation Findings

A total of 1,244 responses were received the Household Survey including 546 postal returns (10.9% response rate) and 698 online surveys completed. There was a good geographical spread of responses from across the city as shown in Figure 8 below. The key findings are summarised below along with the results of other consultation processes.

Importance of Parks and Green Spaces

Research to inform the development of this strategy has found that parks and green spaces are very important to the city's residents:

- 95.1% 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that parks and green spaces enhance their health and wellbeing.
- 94.5% 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that parks and green spaces enhance their quality of life.
- 93.7% 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that parks and green spaces have a positive impact on the local community.

Most Used and Valued Green Spaces

Parks and Green Spaces are very well used in Coventry. Data from the Household Survey shows that seven in ten people (70.4%) visiting them at least once a week (three out of ten daily).

The main reasons for visiting parks and green spaces are:

- fresh air.
- for walking / jogging; to relax or enjoy peace and quiet.
- for wildlife and nature.
- for the children to play / visit a play area.

The most frequently visited parks and green spaces are:

- War Memorial Park
- Allesley Park
- Coombe Country Park

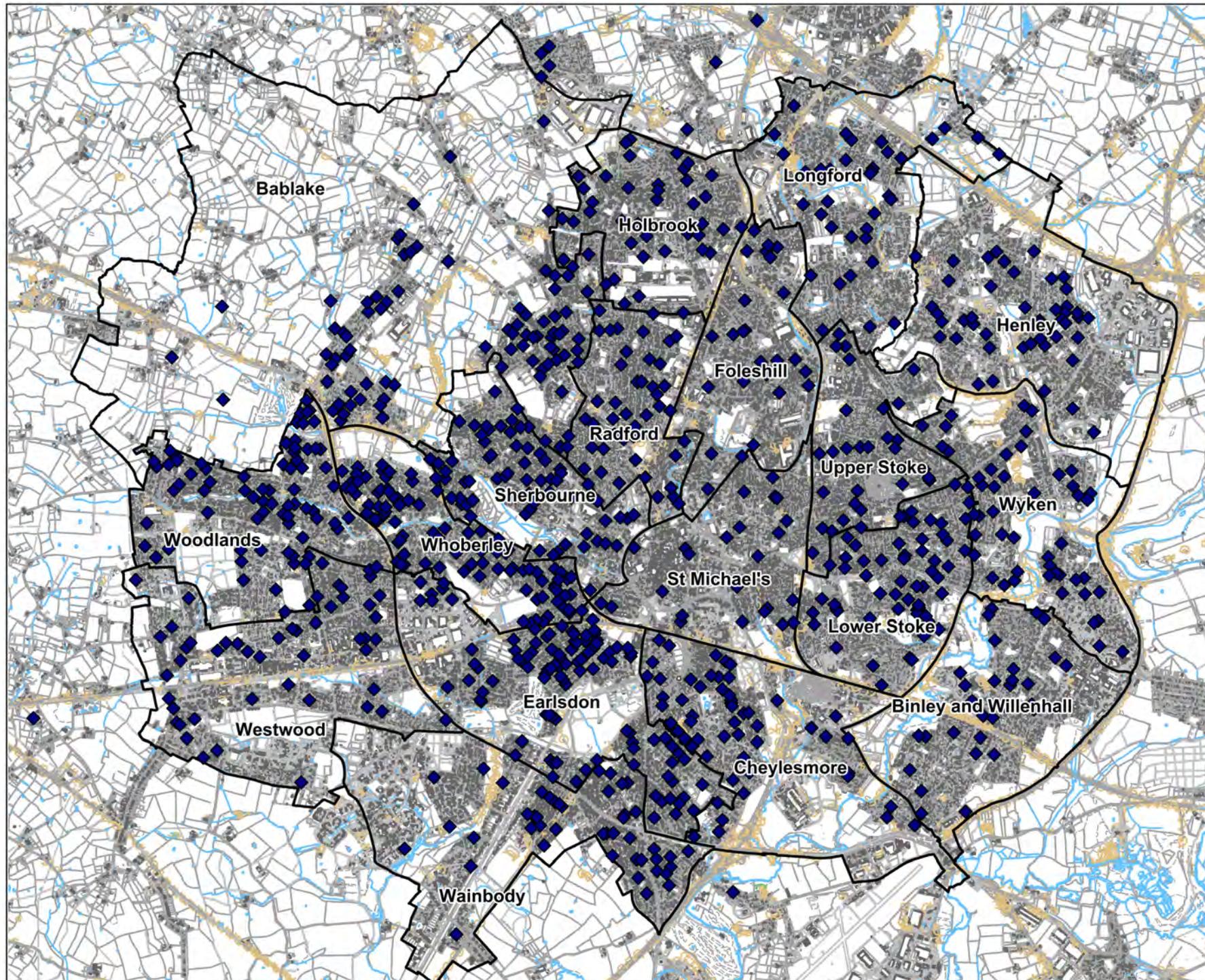
Coventry Greenspace Strategy

Figure 8
Household Survey
Responent Locaiions

LEGEND

Respondent
Postcode
Location

Ward Boundaries



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- Spencer Park
- Longford Park
- Coundon Hall Sports Ground / Park (and other sites within Coundon Wedge)
- Lake View Park
- Caludon Castle Park

Whilst destination sites are important, many people visit green spaces within their local area. Two thirds of respondents (61.3%) to the Household Survey take less than ten minutes to travel to their most used park or green space.

Satisfaction and Quality

Satisfaction levels with Parks and Gardens and Natural Green Space are typically high with 70.7% and 61.2% of respondents respectively being either very satisfied or satisfied. However, satisfaction with Outdoor Sports Facilities, Children’s Play and Provision for Teenagers is much lower.

Generally, many spaces are considered to be good quality with two out of five respondents (49.2%) giving a quality score of 4 (out of 5) to green spaces in their local area. However, two fifths (40.3%) think that the quality of spaces in Coventry will decline over the next three years (compared to 32.4% in the State of UK Parks 2016).

Barriers to accessing and using Green Space

Our research has found that there are some key barriers to communities accessing and using green spaces. The Household Survey found that nearly one on three (31.8%) respondents do not use the green space nearest to where they live but will travel further to use another space.

Key barriers regularly cited include:

- perceptions of anti-social behaviour
- spaces not feeling safe
- dog fouling
- lack of facilities and poor quality facilities
- poor access to volumes of traffic, speed of traffic and concerns over the safety of cycling

Whilst the barriers cited above relate to green space provision, management and urban design, the most frequently cited barrier was 'lack of time'.

Priority Improvements

The Household Survey found that the highest priority improvements are:

- more (or better) seating and bins
- more wildlife habitats
- better control of dogs / dog fouling
- better visitor facilities, particularly toilets and refreshment provision
- more / better provision for teenagers and young people.

From our 'weighted gap'⁷ analysis it is clear that more provision and better provision for teenagers is a highest priority. Other types of green space were considered to be very important (all above 90%) but satisfaction levels for teenage provision was exceptionally low at just 11.9% (compared to Parks and Gardens at 71.15).

In terms of maintenance operations, the highest priorities for the future are:

- grass cutting
- maintenance and repair of paths and hard surfaces
- maintaining children's play areas
- looking after wildlife habitats
- shrub and hedge maintenance.

Stakeholder consultation highlighted the need for:

⁷ weighted gap analysis considers the relationship between the satisfaction level and importance for each green space type. This calculation takes the importance respondents attach to a green space type and compares this to the satisfaction levels taking into account how meaningful that gap is to the sample.

- improved marketing and communication about green spaces, facilities and their management
- promotion of ways to report defects and issues
- more support for community groups and volunteer participation
- training and capacity building for volunteers
- attracting more people to use parks through events and activities and educational use
- greater volunteer participation of children and young people
- more flexible approaches to maintenance
- more consideration of opportunities to generate income to sustain green spaces.

The Supply and Distribution of Green Spaces

Key messages emerging about the supply of green space include:

- There is a need for more green spaces in the City Centre.
- Improved networks of green space and better connectivity.
- Quantity and quality of green space provision should be balanced – areas of deprivation and new communities need access to good quality local green space.
- The provision of green space varies significantly by type and geography. Whilst access to Parks and Gardens and to a lesser degree semi-natural green space and amenity green space, is typically perceived to be ‘about right’ there are perceived deficiencies in the quantity of provision of outdoor sports facilities, children’s play and provision for teenagers.
- The wards of Foleshill, Henley, Holbrook, Radford and St Michael’s are considered by residents to have less open space of all types when compared to the average city-wide data.

People, Communities and Partnerships

The consultation, particularly stakeholder consultation, has highlighted the importance that local people place on protecting green spaces for the future through the planning process. Concerns were raised by members of Friends groups, Tree Wardens and community groups about the threat to green spaces from development and the scale of development that had been witnessed since the last Green Space Strategy was developed. There is support for planning policy that protects and allows the enhancement of green spaces within the city.

6 Analysis & Findings

6.1 Vision

The vision for the Green Space Strategy is:

Coventry City Council will work in partnership to ensure that green spaces in Coventry are high quality, safe and accessible and contribute to the health, wellbeing and quality of life of local people.

This will be achieved through clear, open and robust planning policies that ensure that green spaces contribute to local character, biodiversity and the regeneration of the city.

6.2 Aims

The aims of the Green Space Strategy are:

1. Providing accessible spaces for play, sport and informal recreation
2. More active and healthy lifestyles, improved physical and mental health and wellbeing and contributing to a reduction in childhood obesity
3. Increased community cohesion
4. Contributing to the heritage and cultural offer in the city
5. Active transport initiatives including safe, traffic free routes
6. Sustaining and improving biodiversity and green infrastructure
7. Securing additional resources

6.3 Analysis & Recommendations

6.3.1 Increasing use of green space

Green spaces are one of the most well used public facilities and national data suggests their use has increased over the past few years. Research by HLF⁸ suggests that there are an estimated 2.6 billion visits made to the UK's parks each year and 90% of households with children under 5 visit their local park at least once a month. The Household Survey carried out in 2017 to inform the development of this strategy found that over 70% of respondents (base 1244) visit a park or green space in Coventry at least once a week, with over three in ten visiting on a daily basis. In addition, 72% of respondents agree that parks and green spaces enhance their quality of life and 71% felt that their health and wellbeing was enhanced by access to green space.

Parks and green space remain an essential local public amenity that is free to access and through recent consultation many residents of the city have highlighted the role of green space in improving community cohesion. Green spaces bring together people from different backgrounds like no other public facilities.

However, funding for public services and in particular parks and green spaces has been in decline nationally since 2010 following the global financial crisis and the domestic UK policy of austerity. This has resulted in significant budget reductions within Coventry with £1 million cut from the grounds maintenance budget and a reduction in the number of staff, including frontline staff.

Significant cuts to parks budgets in the 1980s and 1990s following the introduction of Compulsory Competitive Tendering led to reductions in quality, increases in anti-social behaviour and a spiral of decline that took decades to reverse. Basic maintenance standards need to be maintained in order to ensure that parks and green spaces remain safe and vibrant spaces to visit and can support greater community use.

Coventry has been successful in its bid to become City of Culture in 2021 and in the run up to this the European City of Sport in 2019 and Year of Wellbeing 2019. These are tremendous achievements and offer a fantastic opportunity for the city to showcase its talent, communities, cultural and heritage assets. There is a target to deliver 1000 events over the twelve-month period and parks and green spaces can provide excellent venues that can accommodate large numbers of

⁸ HLF (2014) - State of UK Public Parks and HLF (2016) - State of UK Public Parks

people across the city and are accessible to local communities. The Streetpride and Green Spaces service will work with the City of Culture team to develop a plan of activity in parks and green spaces and identify any investment in infrastructure to support the delivery of these events. The Council will seek to develop a network of community hub sites that can support medium to large size events across the city and use any investment to support proposals for future income generation.

Recommendations

1. Continue to promote Coventry’s parks and green spaces as essential local facilities serving all sections of the community.
2. Ensure that standards of basic maintenance are delivered and sustained across all parks and green spaces.
3. Review the existing measures to address litter and broken glass within parks and greenspaces in response to the findings of the Household Survey.
4. Identify investment required to provide improved infrastructure to support greater use of key parks and open spaces as events spaces to support the delivery of City of Culture 2021.
5. Ensure that parks and green spaces contribute to the delivery of the City of Culture 2021.

6.3.2 Addressing Barriers to Greater Use

Whilst levels of use of parks and green spaces in Coventry is high, consultation with local residents during the development of this strategy identified a number of potential barriers to use and other factors that suppress usage. These include:

- Anti-social behaviour
- Control of dogs and dog fouling
- Lack of facilities
- Perceptions of safety
- Poor quality facilities
- Distance to green space.

Anti-social behaviour in parks and green spaces was the highest external factor that was identified as a barrier through the Household Survey, cited by 23% of respondents, and a further 15.5% highlighted the issue of perceptions of safety. Whilst parks and green spaces are generally safe

places, the perception of safety will have a significant impact upon their level of use and disproportionately affect their use by specific sections of the community, particularly children and young people, women, older people and BAME communities. The issue was also raised through community workshops to inform the development of the strategy and potential solutions to raising awareness of the issues and addressing concerns were identified. The proposed solutions include better promotion of the existing Coventry City Council Customer Service Centre communication channels which includes a freephone telephone number and the contact form on the Council website. The Council will promote this central system for the recording of anti-social behaviour and issues relating to wider greens space management and maintenance. Criminal activity should be reported to the Police and the Council green spaces team will continue to work with the community safety team and West Midlands Police to identify and target anti-social behaviour hotspots.

A further solution is to consider the establishment of a Park Watch scheme where there is interest from the local community. Such schemes involve local volunteers, similar to Neighbourhood Watch programmes and provide a local mechanism for reporting anti-social behaviour, graffiti and vandalism enabling the Police to build up a profile of such activity.

Control of dogs and dog fouling was also highlighted as a significant barrier through the Household Survey and raised through the community workshops. Whilst the quality assessment found that most spaces were relatively free of dog fouling, this is an issue along with control of dogs, that can be a significant barrier. Coventry City Council has a mechanism for reporting dog fouling and out of control dogs on its website and currently carries out enforcement action as required. The Council will continue to promote existing channels for reporting these issues and take targeted enforcement action as required. It will also continue to work with community based organisations to promote responsible dog ownership linked to national campaigns such as those run by the Keep Britain Tidy.

- Recommendations**
- 6. Promote existing methods for reporting and recording crime and anti-social behaviour in parks and green spaces.
 - 7. Continue to work with Police and community safety teams to highlight and address anti-social behaviour hotspots.
 - 8. Consider the establishment of a Park Watch scheme to encourage the participation of local people in increasing community safety.
 - 9. Promote reporting mechanisms to address dog fouling in parks and green spaces (including the online dog fouling reporting form).

Recommendations

10. Continue to carry out targeted enforcement action at hotspots to address dog fouling and poor dog control.
11. Work with friends and community groups to deliver campaigns to encourage responsible dog ownership.

6.3.3 Green space and Public Health

The analysis of the supply and accessibility of green spaces set out earlier in this strategy demonstrates that at a city-wide level Coventry benefits from a good level of provision with most residents living near to an accessible green space. Public Health research published in "Shape up Coventry"⁹ found that around three in five of Coventry's families live within 250 metres of a green space at least the size of a football pitch. The research also suggested that families living in the greatest areas of deprivation generally live closer to parks and green spaces, although the most affluent households tend to have better than average access to parks. The Household Survey however, found that nearly one third (31.8%) of respondents did not visit their nearest green space preferring to travel further to a space that better met their needs.

As local accessible facilities available across the city, parks and green spaces play an important role in sustaining and improving health and wellbeing. Being outdoors and having contact with nature is proven to bring benefits for mental health, and green spaces can contribute to increased activity with benefits for physical health. Through the 'Coventry on the Move' programme there has been investment in 44 parks and green spaces, with the creation of marked routes and measured trails as well as footpath improvements (at key sites) to improve accessibility. This initial phase of investment has now been completed and a programme of activity and events is starting to be rolled out to encourage greater use of these spaces. This strategy endorses that approach which seeks to:

- Promote the use of the Coventry on the Move routes

⁹ Coventry City Council (2016) – Shape Up Coventry : The Urgency of Promoting Healthy Weight Among Children and Young People

- Develop an ongoing programme of events and activities that increase activity
- Promote the use of parks and green spaces by local schools as venues for sports and schemes such as “bikeability” to increase activity and reduce childhood obesity
- Develop a network of community hubs and a community champions model to increase activity and deliver sustained improvements to health and wellbeing targeted towards those areas with lowest health outcomes
- Provision of other facilities such as trim trails, outdoor gyms and health and fitness provision that appeal to all sections of the community. Such provision may also help address the perceived deficiency in facilities that are attractive to children and young people, particularly teenagers identified through the Household Survey.

As part of the Coventry on the Move programme there should be a structured evaluation process which seeks to establish the effectiveness of the interventions against the stated aims, that shares the learning from the delivery of the programmes and is used to determine the design and delivery of future approaches.

City wide proposals for increasing activity and improving health outcomes include a focus on children and young people as a key target audience. National research¹⁰ cited in Shape Up Coventry suggests that the availability of free Wi-Fi influences the choices children and young people make about visiting public places. Whilst the aim is to increase the activity of children and young people in parks, there may be an argument for testing the provision of free Wi-fi to establish if this could help attract more visits from this audience. A pilot project to provide free Wi-Fi in a number of parks should be considered and its effectiveness evaluated. This may require external funding to achieve.

There also needs to be a focus on improving access to green spaces from local neighbourhoods. Poor access on foot, by bicycle and public transport has been identified through consultation to inform the development of the Green Space Strategy. Busy roads and a lack of safe crossing points can make accessing parks and green spaces challenging and this adversely affects children and young people and older people. The Household Survey found that just 3.3% of journeys to parks and green spaces were made by bicycle. This strategy recommends reviewing the opportunities to create safer routes to green spaces from local neighbourhoods as part of a holistic approach to

¹⁰ Royal Society for Public Health (2016) - Child’s Obesity Strategy

developing community hubs. In doing so, approaches would also support the city wide Choose How You Move campaign and active travel elements of the Air Quality Improvement Plan.

The Year of Wellbeing 2019 offers the opportunity for parks and green spaces to contribute to the ambition across Coventry and Warwick to get everyone active through physical activity campaigns. The relative accessibility of parks and green spaces also means that such activities can bring people together as a community and helping to address other issues such as social isolation.

Networks of parks and green spaces are important as traffic free routes for walking and cycling. In order to recognise these links, the mapping work to develop the strategy has placed greater emphasis on identifying specific spaces as green corridors. Many of these routes include river corridors or the Coventry Canal network and a partnership approach should be adopted to facilitate improved management and enhancement of these routes. The opportunities to enhance and extend these networks should be reviewed and protection should be offered through the planning process. The protection of river corridors will offer greater flood storage and water quality benefits. Access improvements can also provide better maintenance access to rivers, helping to improve and sustain the quality of these spaces.

There is also considerable scope for working with schools and school communities including parents to develop projects to improve local green spaces. One-off and ongoing projects can bring together local people and enhance ownership and community cohesion. Many parks and green spaces have local friends groups or other community based organisations that are working to care for and improve such spaces. The Council recognises the valuable contributions that such groups make and that many have extensive local networks and often relationships with local schools. Through the delivery of this strategy we will seek to support and enhance the development of these networks and provide opportunities for more people to become involved in looking after their local environment.

The Council will also develop promotional materials that support greater schools and community participation. A green space map for local schools identifying their local green space and local friends groups could be developed as part of this promotional material.

Recommendations

- 12. Promote the new 'Coventry on the Move' activity routes to increase accessibility, activity and achieve benefits for health and wellbeing.

- 13. Through the 'Coventry on the Move' initiative develop a programme of activities in parks and green spaces that increases activity and brings health and wellbeing benefits to Coventry's residents.

Recommendations

14. Develop a network of community hubs and a community champions model to increase activity and deliver sustained improvements to health and wellbeing targeted on those areas with lowest health outcomes.
15. Promote parks and green spaces as way of getting children and young people more active.
16. Promote parks as venues for sports and other activities for local schools to encourage activity and contribute to the reduction in childhood obesity.
17. The Council, working with community partners, will support and encourage schools (and school communities including parents) to become involved in using and caring for their local green spaces.
18. The Council will develop promotional materials about the opportunities for schools to become involved in projects to care for and improve local green spaces.
19. Develop a pilot project to provide Wi-Fi in key parks to establish if this is a significant factor in encouraging the participation of children and young people.
20. Explore the potential demand for the provision of trim trails and outdoor gyms.
21. Work with Public Health and partner organisations to evaluate the success of the Coventry on the Move project to inform the future development of the scheme.
22. Work with Highways and Public Health to provide safe routes to parks and green spaces for pedestrian and cyclists to address identified barriers.
23. Identify opportunities to create better networks of green spaces / green corridors as traffic free routes for walking, cycling (and water-based leisure activities) to promote health and wellbeing.

6.3.4 Addressing deficiencies in Quantity and Accessibility

The quantity analysis set out earlier in section 4 identified that overall there is an average of 3.54 hectares of unrestricted green space per 1,000 population across the city. However, there is significant variation at a ward level with ten wards enjoying provision above this level and a further eight having less provision. Against this measure, Henley ward has nearly twelve times more unrestricted green space than Foleshill. The levels of provision for different types of green space is also varied with three wards (Bablake, Binley & Willenhall and Wainbody) not containing any Parks and Gardens, three wards (Radford, St Michael's and Upper Stoke) not containing any



Natural and Semi-natural Green Space and only seven wards having any unrestricted Outdoor Sports Facilities.

The quantity of green space dedicated to use by children and young people is perceived to be low as evidenced from the responses to the Household Survey. Children's play provision achieved a satisfaction rating of 36.0% and provision for teenagers lower at just 11.9%. Under the weighted gap analysis teenage provision was the highest priority and children's play provision third. Equipped and natural play facilities are provided at 46 green spaces across the city, with further provision in the form of multi-use games areas, ball courts and skate parks at 18 green spaces. Approximately half the city area is within 400 metres of an equipped play area or green space with provision for teenagers. However, other green spaces offer informal opportunities for play, sports, informal recreation and socialising. Whilst there is an ambition to increase the use of green spaces by children and young people there are financial constraints on the authority both in terms of new capital expenditure and ongoing revenue for maintenance. The Council will seek to enhance existing green spaces and make them more attractive facilities for children and young people and will consider specific provision where appropriate to a specific site but does not aim to significantly increase the number of play and youth provision sites without further external funding and ongoing revenue support.

In terms of accessibility, most areas of the city have access to some form of unrestricted green space within 400m. This measure is included in the Coventry Local Plan (2016) as a standard for the quantity of green space for new residential development. The revised greenspace hierarchy and accessibility modelling considers access to District, Neighbourhood and Local level spaces at 1200 metres, 800 metres and 400 metres respectively. Against this model most areas of the city have reasonable access to unrestricted green space. The Coventry Local Plan also sets out an accessibility standard for the provision of Outdoor Sports Facilities for new residential development. This standard is based on access within 1000 metres. Against this measure most of the city has good access to some form of Outdoor Sports Facility, although many have restricted (limited) access requiring membership or other eligibility criteria. Access to unrestricted Outdoor Sports Facilities is significantly lower with approximately two thirds of the city lacking access.

The Playing Pitch Strategy for Coventry has been reviewed and updated in 2018. This identifies deficiencies in the quantity of provision for football, rugby, cricket and hockey. The Playing Pitch Strategy makes recommendations to address the deficiencies in pitch provision through the planning process and by increasing access to other institutional facilities such as school pitches. The Green Space Strategy endorses this approach.

The picture of green space provision in Coventry is a complex one, compounded by significant variations in the quantity and accessibility of provision by type of space and geography. This strategy has proposed draft Local Standards covering the quantity, quality and accessibility of different types of green spaces. It is recommended that these Local Standards are reviewed and adopted by the Council in order to form planning policy.

The analysis carried out as part of the development of this strategy and the draft Local Standards provide a mechanism whereby the need for new green space can be determined, or alternatively whether investment should be made to improve the quality of existing spaces.

Local Plan Policy GE1 states that “Where open space is created within developments, it will be of a high and lasting design quality which seeks to minimise on-going maintenance pressures”. Green Infrastructure is listed as an acceptable form of infrastructure as part of policy IM1. Over the last ten years there are a number of new green spaces that have been provided by developers as part of housing development with ongoing maintenance carried out by a local management company. The standard of maintenance carried out by such management companies has not always been to a reasonable standard and there have been requests from local residents for the Council to adopt the green space. Due to budget constraints and recent reductions in the grounds maintenance budgets there is reluctance by the Council’s Streetpride and Green Spaces team to take on the maintenance of additional land without adequate financial resources to do so on an ongoing basis.

A similar situation has arisen related to the adoption of highways created through new development. The Coventry Connected SPD sets out the principle that the starting point would be the Council adoption of highways with a suitable maintenance bond. However, the SPD recognises that some modern estates will prefer to manage the assets themselves and this is accepted where the highways are built to an adoptable standard should a change in circumstances occur in the future. In addition, Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) features are often situated within areas of new greenspace. Currently arrangements can be made for a private company to maintain SuDS, however the industry appears to be moving towards more adoption of SuDS by Water and Sewerage Management Companies, for example the 25 Year Environment Plan states:

“Water and sewerage companies can also help to improve surface water management. The Government’s strategic priorities and objectives for Ofwat, the water industry regulator, set out how we expect companies to be challenged to develop a mix of solution to meet current and future water management needs. This includes improved partnership working with local authorities to manage flood risk and adoption and maintenance of SuDS”.

This development has also been alluded to in the UK Surface Water Management Action Plan (July 2018), whilst SuDS have been included in a pre-implementation version of Sewers for Adoption 8, to be implemented in May 2019. This potential emerging change may influence the Council's future approach to Greenspaces adoption and maintenance, particularly given the prevalence of SuDS in new developments, such as the draft Eastern Green Masterplan. In this context, it is recommended that with respect to green spaces the exact detail around maintenance bonds and adoption of land would be addressed through the future development of a (green space) Developer Contributions SPD.

Allotment provision in Coventry is provided under community management through a lease agreement with Coventry and District Allotments and Garden Council. The agreement covers 54 sites. Allotment provision has been identified and recorded through data capture and mapping but this strategy has not looked in any details at the current levels of supply and demand. Consultation through the development of the strategy has indicated there is potential demand for increased community gardening within the city as well as other forms of food production through hedgerows, community orchards and urban forestry. Members of the Council's parks and green spaces team attend the 'Feeding Coventry' working groups which provide a forum for co-ordination of community food initiatives which can contribute to improved health and wellbeing and poverty reduction.

- Recommendations**
- 24. Develop and adopt local standards for the quantity, quality and accessibility of parks and green spaces.
 - 25. Produce and adopt a Green Space Developer Contributions SPD.
 - 26. Consider the opportunities to adopt a strategic approach to increase the quantity for provision for teenagers in key parks and green spaces.
 - 27. Address quantitative deficiencies in playing pitch provision as identified in the (revised) playing pitch strategy.
 - 28. Improve community access to educational sports facilities through shared use agreements (link to PPS 2018).
 - 29. Review current and future demand for allotment provision, community gardening and urban forestry food production, identify opportunities and develop an action plan.

6.3.5 Addressing Quality

The quality assessment has established benchmark data for 223 unrestricted green spaces that have been assessed using the Green Flag Award criteria. The proposed Local Standards set out suggested minimum quality thresholds for different types of space. The table below summarises these standards and identifies the number of green spaces currently below this level.

Green Space Type	Proposed Quality Standard	No. of sites not achieving this standard
Parks and Gardens	City Park - 80	-
	District Park - 70.	1
	Neighbourhood Park - 50	9
	Local Park - 50	2
Amenity Green Space	All sites – 30	12
Natural and Semi-natural Green Space	All sites - 40	15
Green Corridors	All sites - 40	7
Outdoor Sports Facilities	All sites - 40	9
Cemeteries and Churchyards	All sites - 50	2

Table 17 Proposed Minimum Green Space Quality Standards

The Green Space Strategy has considered and recorded all green spaces regardless of ownership. Therefore, some of the spaces not achieving the proposed standards may be in the ownership and management of other organisations. As a principle, the Council will focus on green spaces in its own ownership, but where resources allow, will liaise with and encourage other organisations to address any deficiencies in quality.

Individual play spaces were not assessed as standalone facilities as part of the quality audit process. However, they are subject to regular health and safety inspections including an annual external audit and data is available about the overall condition of each equipped play space. Satisfaction with provision for children and young people as recorded through the Household Survey is low. It is recommended that a review of children’s play provision is carried out and opportunities to address the lowest quality provision is identified. Improvements to upgrade play provision may require external funding, including that through planning gain, and an action plan should be developed to improve the lowest quality spaces.

The Playing Pitch Strategy has identified deficiencies in the quality of playing pitch provision which identifies opportunities to raise quality on a site by site basis. The recommendations of the Playing

Pitch Strategy should be reviewed as an additional data source when considering measures to address the quality of provision in a specific geographical area.

The quality assessment carried out as part of the development of the strategy is a snapshot of the quality of specific spaces and the overall sample at a fixed point in time. The data will remain current for only a limited time period and will need to be reviewed and updated. It is recommended that the Green Flag based assessment is carried out using the same methodology in five years. This will allow any changes to be recorded and understood and for progress to be demonstrated in sustaining and improving the quality of green space in Coventry.

Recommendations

- 30. Address qualitative deficiencies in green space provision as identified by the Local Standards proposed in this strategy.
- 31. Develop a strategic approach to addressing poor perceptions relating to the quality of play provision.
- 32. Address qualitative deficiencies in playing pitch provision as identified in the (revised 2018) playing pitch strategy.
- 33. Work with other landowners to address low quality green spaces as identified through the quality assessment.
- 34. Carry out a Green Flag based audit at the end of the strategy period to measure change against the baseline data (2017).

6.3.6 Biodiversity & Green Infrastructure

Coventry green spaces are very important for wildlife and biodiversity and in providing residents of the city with contact with nature. Over 43% of the unrestricted green space in the city is Natural and Semi-natural Green Space and a further 7.9% of green space is classified as green corridors, many of which are important for biodiversity.

Coventry City Council works closely with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, Warwickshire County Council and other organisations in the Local Biodiversity Action Partnership to deliver habitat and species action plans. A partnership approach is also taken to delivering the sub-regional Green



Infrastructure Strategy¹¹ which includes a set of Green Infrastructure Standards for Sustainable Development as adopted in the Coventry Local Plan. This Green Space Strategy recognises the recommendations with respect to enhancement zones, biodiversity strategic areas and accessibility standards for natural green space within the green infrastructure study and endorses the approaches to:

- Safeguard and enhance all Green Infrastructure Biodiversity Assets as proposed in the sub-regional GI Strategy
- Connect together individual sub-regional green infrastructure biodiversity assets to form core areas as proposed in the sub-regional GI Strategy
- Connect the Core Areas together to form large functional clusters as proposed in the sub-regional GI Strategy.

Green corridors form an important element of the landscape within Coventry, particularly those of the Coventry Canal and the river corridors of the Sowe and Sherbourne. The Sowe Valley Partnership is an effective project that involved over 3000 people and continues with the support of Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and a range of volunteers and community-based organisations. It forms a useful model for future projects and the Council will continue to work with partners to sustain the impact of this initiative. Currently there are projects to improve the River Sherbourne, to make it more accessible in the city centre by de-culverting and to improve the setting in a partnership project with the Historic Coventry Trust at The Charterhouse. There may be opportunities for flood alleviation works as part of other improvement projects. The Warwickshire Wildlife Trust led project at Lake View Park is a good example of this. Improvements to wildlife habitats along river corridors are also consistent with the Council's requirements under the Water Framework directive.

The EU Withdrawal Bill will carry over existing European Union law including the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (WFD), into domestic law. The Council is legally accountable for WFD compliance and must not prejudice future opportunities for water quality improvement. This Green Space Strategy recognises there will be opportunities for WFD improvements on many green spaces. New mitigation measures for the Sherbourne water body are due to be published by the Environment Agency in 2019. In addition, the Warwickshire Avon Catchment Partnership

¹¹ Warwickshire Museum & Natural Environment (2013) - Warwickshire, Coventry & Solihull Sub-regional Green Infrastructure Strategy

have produced the Warwickshire Avon catchment plan. Coventry brooks and rivers are described as a priority sub-catchment area (p7) within the Plan.

A focus on Water Framework Directive improvements has delivered external funding for improvements on green spaces, for example through the Guphill Brook Riverine Enhancement project (2015) and the project at Lake View Park. There is a commitment from the Coventry City Council Flood Risk Management and Drainage team to work with land managers within the authority and with other partners to secure more external funding for WFD improvements.

A project to develop a Living Landscape Scheme for the River Sherbourne and its tributaries, for people and wildlife, and to share its heritage is currently in development and offers such an opportunity. An application for Heritage Lottery Funding was made in late 2018. The Council will continue to work with and support the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, strengthening the partnership and seek to develop projects to address priority species and habitats as set out in the Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

The Coventry Canal forms an important green (and blue) infrastructure link from the city centre, terminating after 38 miles at Fradley junction, just north of Lichfield. A total of 5.5 miles of the Canal lie within the city boundary and this route has been developed as an art trail with 39 sculptures and art works visible along the route. The project was a partnership between Coventry City Council, The Canal and River Trust (formerly British Waterways) and the Coventry Canal Society which secured funding from central government, the European Union and National Lottery. The project has proved to be very successful in attracting visitors and encouraging exploration of the trail. As part of the proposals to sustain this project there are further improvements that could be delivered to create better links to the communities that live along the route and this strategy proposes that work is carried out to explore the feasibility of this and to seek funding to deliver these further enhancements.

Further opportunities to enhance and develop the green corridors should be explored through the delivery of this Strategy.

Parallel to the development of this Green Space Strategy, Coventry City Council is developing an Urban Forestry Strategy which will seek to demonstrate the value of urban trees, forestry and woodland within Coventry and set out proposals to safeguard these assets for the future. The Coventry Tree Wardens are an important mechanism for protecting and safeguarding the city's rich tree stock and the group has participated in the consultation to develop this strategy. This Green Space Strategy recognises the significance of the role of trees, urban forestry and woodland

within the city but focuses on more strategic issues. It is recommended that the Urban Forestry Strategy is implemented alongside the Green Space Strategy through the same working groups.

The city despite its high density development and urban nature contains significant amounts of natural and semi-natural green space, woodland and street trees. This contributes to quality of life through enhanced visual amenity as well as the important functions that trees and woodlands provide in terms of improving air quality, providing shelter, reducing extremes of temperature and helping to alleviate flooding and supporting wildlife. Trees also play an important role in carbon capture and with a renewed international and national focus on climate change, the Council will seek to increase the tree cover across the city as part of its commitment to environmental sustainability. The Council will seek to deliver an ambitious plan to plant a tree for every citizen of the city (current population 360,000 people) during the lifetime of this strategy. This ambition would need to be delivered through a partnership with other landowners including residents and other private landowners.

Coventry has won national acclaim and awards through the creation of pictorial meadows alongside highways and within parks and green spaces. Currently 20,000 square metres are managed as pictorial meadows which bring colour and life to those areas of the city and bring benefits for biodiversity supporting pollination and insect populations. The Council will identify opportunities for further meadow creation and the implementation of maintenance regimes that contribute to the delivery of National Pollinator framework by creating more high-quality flower-rich habitats.

The Council will also explore the opportunities to adopt more ecological approaches to land management creating species rich grassland and new woodland where appropriate and seek to secure funding through sources such as biodiversity offsetting where applicable. Biodiversity offsets are conservation activities that are designed to give biodiversity benefits to compensate for losses - ensuring that when a development damages nature (and this damage cannot be avoided or mitigated) new nature sites will be created. Where appropriate, biodiversity offsetting is an option available to developers to fulfil their obligations under the planning system's mitigation hierarchy. Coventry City Council has recently appointed an ecologist within the planning team and the authority is seeking to identify opportunities for rich grassland and new woodland sites eligible under The Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Biodiversity Offsetting scheme. Consideration should also be given to the opportunities for wetland sites.

Recommendations

35. Work in partnership to deliver the recommendations of the Sub-regional Green Infrastructure Strategy to safeguard and enhance biodiversity assets and create greater connectivity to form core areas and large functional clusters.

Recommendations

36. Maintain and strengthen the partnership with WWT and develop projects to address priority species and habitats as set out in the Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Local Biodiversity Action Plan.
37. Seek to improve access to and promote blue and green corridors as important linear routes including those of the Coventry Canal, River Sowe and Sherbourne corridors.
38. Seek funding for the River Sherbourne Living Landscape Project in partnership with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust.
39. Continue to promote the Coventry Canal Art Trail and seek opportunities to expand this into adjacent green spaces and communities.
40. Implement the findings of the Urban Forestry Strategy to protect and enhance the city's rich heritage of street trees, urban forestry and woodlands alongside the implementation of this strategy.
41. Working in partnership with other landowners (and residents), and subject to funding, consider an aspiration for planting a tree for every citizen in the city.
42. Identify projects and opportunities to contribute to the delivery of National Pollinator framework by creating more high quality flower-rich habitats including pictorial meadows.
43. Identify opportunity sites that provide the potential to secure funding through Biodiversity Offsetting.

6.3.7 Supporting community participation

Coventry has an impressive track record supporting friends groups and community based organisations in developing and improving green spaces. As well as site specific friends groups and the Coventry Tree Wardens, there are a number of sports clubs and the city's allotments are self-managed by Coventry and District Allotment and Gardens Council. The Green Space and Heritage Forum is supported by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and officers from Coventry City Council and the parks team carry out improvement projects in partnership with community groups and residents' associations. Further activity is supported by the rangers and by frontline staff at Coombe Country Park and War Memorial Park.

The Council will continue to work with and support friends groups, the Tree Warden network and other community based organisations through the Green Space and Heritage Forum. Support to

new groups will be offered, subject to available resources, and new groups will be prioritised in areas of need, particularly those areas with poor quality green spaces and areas where public health outcomes are poor.

Parks provide an excellent venue for communities and other organisations to hold their own events. Through consultation it has been identified that policies and procedures and booking systems to enable this approach could be improved. It is recommended that events policies are updated and that training sessions are delivered to promote and encourage the third party use of green spaces for events and activities.

Friends groups have also expressed interest in further support to develop specific actions plans for developing their organisations. Consideration should be given to developing further support materials and capacity building sessions to enable groups to develop plans to grow their membership, run events, seek external funding and to identify their own priorities.

The budget reductions experienced by Coventry City Council has led to cuts to parks and green space services and this has resulted in fewer staff to support volunteer and community participation. Partnerships with other organisations are proving effective, but there would appear to be a case for further resources to support and grow the role of the community and voluntary sector. There is also a need for the Council to play a greater leadership role in delivering this strategy and developing a strategic approach to partnership development. Coventry City Council will review the opportunities to increase the staffing resource to support community groups, help secure external funding and potentially funds through the planning process and increased commercial activity.

Recommendations

- 44. Continue to promote and support the Green Space and Heritage Forum.
- 45. Work with friends and community groups to develop volunteer / group action plans and identify training needs.
- 46. Continue to support the Tree Warden programme and develop an action plan aligned to this strategy.
- 47. Support the establishment of new friends and community groups where there is community interest focused on areas where there is greatest need.
- 48. Develop clear guidance to support external and community based organisations using parks for events.
- 49. Increase the staffing resource to develop partnerships and secure additional funding.



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A 1000 metre trail
www.stokeheath.org



Stoke S

Walking Safety Checklist
Consider Energy Levels
Consider Route Size

6.3.8 *Alternative Models of Provision*

As part of the strategy development there has been research carried out to look at alternative forms of service provision and the scope for applying one or more approaches within Coventry. The research considered other models being considered across the UK including:

- Traditional local authority funding
- Multi-agency public sector funding
- Taxation initiatives
- Planning and development opportunities
- Bonds and commercial finance
- Income generating opportunities
- Endowments
- Voluntary and community sector involvement.

These models are not mutually exclusive and blended approaches are being increasingly adopted by local authorities across the country. To a certain extent, Coventry City Council has adopted this approach with green space services funded through local authority funding, some through multi-agency approaches, planning gain, income generation and the involvement of the community and voluntary sector. As described above, the community and voluntary sectors have been very effective in Coventry adding significant value to the service and providing effective mechanisms to increase ownership and engage with local communities. Community asset transfer has occurred in Coventry, with the allotments provision managed by a community based organisation, but there are relatively few other examples of 'whole site' transfers. The Friends of Spencer Park is recognised for having taken on the management and maintenance of the pavilion and sports facilities but the group did not wish to take on the responsibility for the whole park. In terms of heritage assets, the Historic Coventry Trust has reached an agreement to take on a number of built heritage assets but again these agreements stop short of taking on larger landscapes. There are likely to be other opportunities for asset transfer within the city and this strategy recommends that opportunities continue to be explored and the feasibility of them explored on a case by case basis. The authority will work with organisations interested in asset transfer to ensure that the implications of the asset transfer are understood and that legal obligations relating to land management, riparian rights and health and safety can be adequately discharged. For example, the Council Flood Risk Management and Drainage team will need to be made aware of any asset transfers to inform the Asset Register, as required by s21 of the Flood and Water Management Act.

Recommendations

50. Explore the opportunities for community asset transfer for suitable facilities within green spaces or the whole site where this may be feasible.

6.3.9 Management

Coventry City Council currently holds the Green Flag Award for 5 parks and green spaces:

- Allesley Park
- Caludon Castle Park
- Coombe Country Park
- Longford Park
- War Memorial Park.

Coventry University also holds a Green Flag Award for the Coventry University Campus. The Council will sustain the number of Green Flag Awards at the current level since within existing resources. It will also seek to identify opportunities to increase the number of Green Flag Awards within the city, and subject to additional funding becoming available, will invest in improving the quality of specific spaces with the aim of achieving this national standard.

London Road Cemetery has achieved funding through the National Lottery Heritage Fund (formerly Heritage Lottery Fund) Parks for People programme and the authority was awarded a grant of £1.6 million in June 2018. The Green Flag Award will need to be achieved (and retained for seven years) as part of the contractual conditions of this grant. An application to the Award scheme will be made following the delivery of the capital works.

The Council will also explore the opportunity to work with community based organisations to achieve the Green Flag Community Award which recognises significant community management of green spaces. The Council will provide support and advice to groups to achieve this ambition.

The standard approach to improving green space quality is through the management planning process and the production of a site-specific management plan. The process is well understood and the authority has an agreed approach and template to producing Management and Maintenance Plans. It will continue to produce site specific management and maintenance plans with a target of producing (or updating) a further three Plans per year.

Through consultation, issues relating to accessibility and disabled access have been raised. The Council will seek to carry out a review of the accessibility of specific green spaces through the management planning process and incorporate recommendations for improved accessibility into new and updated Plans.

The initial community workshops identified suggestions for improving the ecological management of parks and green spaces and enhancing biodiversity value. The grounds maintenance schedule should be reviewed to identify opportunities for less intensive maintenance approaches that will benefit biodiversity. This approach may also produce some financial savings from reduced grass cutting frequencies.

The Byelaws relating to parks and green spaces are out of date and would benefit from review. One example is that the Byelaws typically prohibit cycling in parks, which conflicts with the aim to get more people cycling and more people active in parks. Other Byelaws will need to be updated to help address anti-social behaviour and reduce the barriers to use.

Currently data on the level of use of parks and green spaces is piecemeal and ad hoc. There is no overall framework for establishing the number of people that use Coventry’s green spaces on an annual basis and therefore it is difficult to establish any trends in the use of these spaces. The authority will seek to develop a model to estimate annual person visits to green spaces across the city.

Currently parks and green space services do not participate in benchmarking with other authorities, other than for fees and charges (carried out on an annual basis). The Council should look to establish some key performance indicators and to compare data with other similar authorities from the family group.

- Recommendations**
- 51. Sustain the number of Green Flag Awards at the current level of 5 Awards and subject to additional funding seek to achieve further Green Flag Awards.
 - 52. Work with community partners to gain the Green Flag Community Award where there is community management of green space
 - 53. Achieve the Green Flag Award for London Road Cemetery following the delivery of the HLF funded restoration works.
 - 54. Management and Maintenance Plans are a key tool in addressing green space quality at a site specific level. Develop a rolling programme for the production of new MMPs for key green space sites.

Recommendations

55. Review grounds maintenance operations and seek to identify opportunities for less intensive management practices that are cost effective and deliver positive outcomes for biodiversity.
56. Through the management planning process ensure that accessibility of green spaces is reviewed and improved.
57. Review and update Byelaws relating to parks and green spaces.
58. Develop a method for measuring and monitoring the level of use of parks and green spaces.
59. Seek to participate in benchmarking service delivery against other family member authorities.

6.3.10 *Securing additional resources*

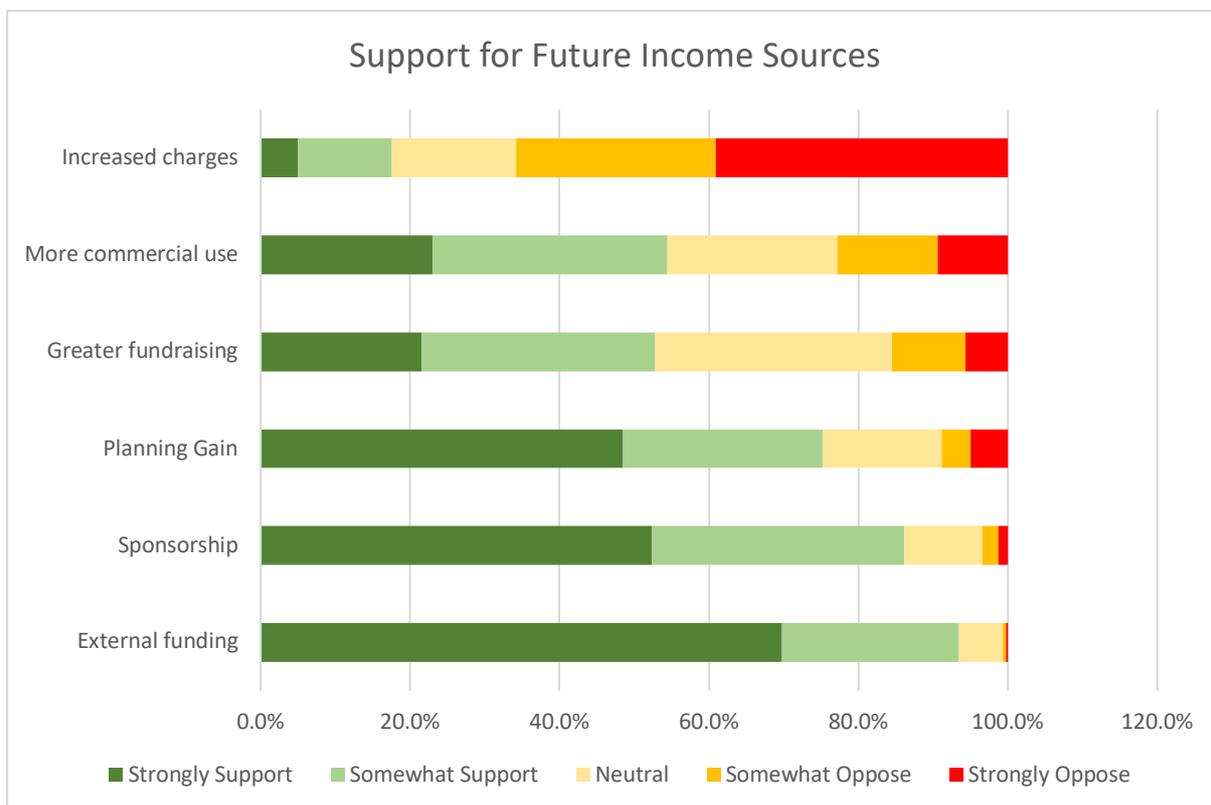
Existing budgets face significant pressures with the grounds maintenance budget having been cut by £1.0 million in 2014/15. Whilst the budgets remain stable at the time of the production of this strategy, there will continue to be constraints on revenue funding and the need to use existing resources more effectively remains.

Like many authorities across the country, Coventry City Council will need to look to secure additional revenue funding from other sources. Opportunities exist to generate additional revenue funding from using green space assets more effectively. A working group has been formed to look at the opportunities to generate income from green space assets such as cafe provision, paid for events and activities, sponsorship and so on. The working group will develop a series of proposals and options for income generation and these actions should be implemented alongside this Green Space Strategy.

The household survey asked respondents to consider the priorities for increasing income to the parks and green space service. The survey found that the key opportunities that were supported included:

- External funding
- Sponsorship

- Planning gain
- Greater fundraising
- More commercial use.



There appeared to be a strong dislike of increasing fees and charges for user groups and sports clubs. This issue was explored at a later workshop and many participants raised concerns about significant increases in fees and charges, leading to reduced levels of use and not being an effective way to raise substantial levels of income. There were also concerns that many communities in Coventry may not be able to afford increased fees and charges and that this would impact upon the use of green spaces as community venues.

Coventry City Council has been successful in securing external funding through sources such as Heritage Lottery Funding and other lottery funding for development projects including the Burges, London Road Cemetery and the Charterhouse project (with Historic Coventry Trust).

War Memorial Park has previously benefited from Heritage Lottery Fund investment and the total invested was over £6 million. This has provided new and enhanced facilities and conserved the

heritage of War Memorial Park, leading to an increase in visitor numbers and an improved visitor experience. The success of the project was confirmed through the quality assessment carried out during the development of the strategy where War Memorial Park achieved the highest score of 89 (out of 100). The park has also held the Green Flag Award since 2012/13.

There is the potential for parks and green spaces in Coventry to accommodate more commercial events and activities and opportunities for this should be explored. Some sites may need investment to improve infrastructure but there may be opportunities to explore this in conjunction with planning for the City of Culture on 2021.

Funding for green space improvements has been secured through section 106 agreements for offsite improvements. However, further work is required if funding is to be available through the Community Infrastructure Levy to improve key green spaces and wider green infrastructure. Proposals should be developed through partnership working between green space services officers and those in planning policy.

- Recommendations**
- 60. Seek to establish a framework for green spaces to access Community Infrastructure Levy funding through the Developer Contributions SPD.
 - 61. Seek to diversify funding streams for parks and open spaces including greater income from external funding, partnerships, commercial activities, fees and charges, and through the planning process.
 - 62. Promote parks and green spaces as venues for community and commercial events.



7 Delivering the Strategy

7.1 A Partnership Approach

Coventry City Council can demonstrate a long-standing track record of partnership working with respect to parks and green spaces. The organisation works with a range of community based and voluntary sector organisations, other local authorities across the region and a range of delivery partners. There is also partnership working with other green space managers such as housing associations and the city's two universities.

Stakeholder workshops identified and stressed the importance of a joined-up partnership approach to managing, maintaining and improving green spaces within Coventry. It was recognised that local authority provision is significant alongside that of many other providers including registered social landlords, the two universities in the city, other education land, private sports clubs and green and blue infrastructure including the canal network and river corridors. The role of the community and voluntary sector, including many 'grass roots' organisations that regularly volunteer to improve green spaces was also highlighted through consultation to develop the strategy. A consistent theme was that Coventry City Council should play a leadership and co-ordination role in green space management and development, continuing to support the many partner organisations.

The role of the voluntary and community sector was almost universally seen as an 'added-value' contribution that should not replace core local authority provision. Community groups and volunteers increase local ownership, bring additional skills and resources to enhance quality and help animate spaces through events and activities. There was significant reluctance from the range of groups engaged for larger scale community asset transfer that would see responsibility for day-to-day management and maintenance being passed to community-based organisations.

The success of this Green Space Strategy is dependent on Coventry City Council working with a range of partners organisations, external agencies and the third sector. The strategy sets out the ambition to develop stronger links with partners and generate greater community participation in green spaces. The action plan shows the lead organisations and a range of partners that will be involved in delivery.

7.2 Resources

This Green Space Strategy has been developed based on the assumption that current Streetpride and Green Spaces budgets will remain static over the lifetime of the strategy and that significant budget reductions for the service area have already occurred.

Currently the service receives around £300,000 annually through planning gain for improvements to improve the quality, accessibility and carrying capacity of existing green spaces. The adoption of Local Standards and updating of planning policy is expected to ensure that these contributions can be maintained and grown over future years.

There is also the opportunity for the green space assets to be used more effectively to generate income to help sustain the service. A review is currently underway and once completed annual targets will be set for income generation.

7.3 Action Plan

Ref	Recommendation	Lead Organisation	Delivery Partners	Timescale	Performance Measure
1.	Continue to promote Coventry's parks and green spaces as essential local facilities serving all sections of the community.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Public Health, Green Space & Heritage Forum	2019/20 & ongoing	Web stats, publications, market / visitor research
2.	Ensure that standards of basic maintenance are delivered and sustained across all parks and green spaces.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	-	2019/20 & ongoing	Monitoring visits, customer comments
3.	Review the existing measures to address litter and broken glass within parks and greenspaces in response to the findings of the Household Survey.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	-	2019/20	Monitoring visits, customer comments
4.	Identify investment required to provide improved infrastructure to support greater use of key parks and open spaces as events spaces to support the delivery of City of Culture 2021.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	City of Culture Trust	2019/20	Costed action plans
5.	Ensure that parks and green spaces contribute to the delivery of the City of Culture 2021.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	City of Culture Trust	2020/21	No. of parks used as venues. No. of events hosted.
6.	Promote existing methods for reporting and recording crime and anti-social behaviour in parks and green spaces.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Customer Services, Community Safety Team, West Midlands Police,	2019/20	Customer Services records

Ref	Recommendation	Lead Organisation	Delivery Partners	Timescale	Performance Measure
			Greenspace & Heritage Forum		
7.	Continue to work with Police and community safety teams to highlight and address anti-social behaviour hotspots.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Customer Services, Community Safety Team, West Midlands Police	2019/20 & ongoing	Crime & ASB statistics.
8.	Consider the establishment of a Park Watch scheme to encourage the participation of local people in increasing community safety.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Community Safety Team, other land managers (Whitefriars Housing, Coventry & Warwickshire Universities etc)	2020/21	Establishment of Park Watch. No. of participating friends s./ community organisations
9.	Promote reporting mechanisms to address dog fouling in parks and green spaces (including online dog fouling reporting form).	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Customer Services	2019/20	Customer comments regarding dog fouling. Enforcement action taken.
10	Continue to carry out targeted enforcement action at hotspots to address dog fouling and poor dog control.	Dog warden	Streetpride & Greenspaces	2019/20 & ongoing	Customer comments. Enforcement action taken.
11	Work with friends and community groups to deliver campaigns to encourage responsible dog ownership.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Dog warden	2020/21 & ongoing	No of campaigns delivered.

Ref	Recommendation	Lead Organisation	Delivery Partners	Timescale	Performance Measure
12	Promote the new 'Coventry on the Move' activity routes to increase accessibility, activity and achieve benefits for health and wellbeing.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Public Health	2019/20 & ongoing	No of participants. Satisfaction data with programme.
13	Through the 'Coventry on the Move' initiative develop a programme of activities in parks and green spaces that increases activity and brings health and wellbeing benefits to Coventry's residents.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Public Health	2020/21	No of participants. Improved health outcomes.
14	Develop a network of community hubs and a community champions model to increase activity and deliver sustained improvements to health and wellbeing targeted on those areas with lowest health outcomes.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Public Health, Sport & Active Recreation Team	2020/21	No. of hubs established. No of participants. Improved health outcomes.
15	Promote parks and green spaces as way of getting children and young people more active.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Public Health, Sport & Active Recreation Team	2020/21	No of participants. Improved health outcomes.
16	Promote parks as venues for sports and other activities for local schools to encourage activity and contribute to the reduction in childhood obesity.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Public Health, Sport & Active Recreation Team	2019/20	No of schools participating. No of participants. Improved health outcomes.
17	The Council, working with community partners, will support and encourage schools (and school	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Greenpace & Heritage Forum	2020/21	No. of projects delivered

Ref	Recommendation	Lead Organisation	Delivery Partners	Timescale	Performance Measure
	communities including parents) to become involved in using and caring for their local green spaces				
18	The Council will develop promotional materials about the opportunities for schools to become involved in projects to care for and improve local green spaces	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Communications Team	2020/21	Map of green space and other promotional materials produced.
19	Develop a pilot project to provide Wi-Fi in key parks to establish if this is a significant factor in encouraging the participation of children and young people.	Public Health	Streetpride & Greenspaces	2020/21	Increased levels of participation. Feedback from young people.
20	Explore the potential demand for the provision of trim trails and outdoor gyms.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Public Health, Sport & Active Recreation Team	2020/21	Pilot project. No. of new facilities delivered.
21	Work with Public Health and partner organisations to evaluate the success of the Coventry on the Move project to inform the future development of the scheme.	Public Health	Streetpride & Greenspaces	2020/21	Evaluation process delivered. Key findings disseminated.
22	Work with Highways and Public Health to provide safe routes to parks and green spaces for pedestrian and cyclists to address identified barriers.	Highways	Public Health, Streetpride & Greenspaces	2019/20 & ongoing	No. of new safe routes created. No of barriers removed / addressed.
23	Identify opportunities to create better networks of green spaces / green corridors as traffic free routes for walking, cycling (and water-based leisure activities) to promote health and wellbeing.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Planning Policy, Highways, Flood Risk Management & Drainage team,	2019/20 & ongoing	Develop action plan.

Ref	Recommendation	Lead Organisation	Delivery Partners	Timescale	Performance Measure
			Canal & River Trust, WWT		
24	Develop and adopt local standards for the quantity, quality and accessibility of parks and green spaces.	Planning Policy	Streetpride & Greenspaces	2019/20	Developer Contributions SPD.
25	Produce and adopt a Green Space Developer Contributions SPD.	Planning Policy	Streetpride & Greenspaces	2019/20	Developer Contributions SPD.
26	Consider the opportunities to adopt a strategic approach to increase the quantity of provision for teenagers in key parks and green spaces.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Planning Policy	2019/20	Develop action plan.
27	Address quantitative deficiencies in playing pitch provision as identified in the (revised) playing pitch strategy.	Sport & Active Recreation	Planning Policy, Streetpride & Greenspaces	2019/20 & ongoing	Increased quantity of playing provision for key sports.
28	Improve community access to educational sports facilities through shared use agreements (link to PPS 2018).	Sport & Active Recreation	Planning Policy, Education, Streetpride & Greenspaces	2019/20 & ongoing	No. of access agreements developed.
29	Review current and future demand for allotment provision, community gardening and urban forestry food production, identify opportunities and develop an action plan.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Coventry & District Allotments & Gardens Council	2019/20	Review provision. Develop action plan.

Ref	Recommendation	Lead Organisation	Delivery Partners	Timescale	Performance Measure
30	Address qualitative deficiencies in green space provision as identified by the Local Standards proposed in this strategy.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Planning Policy	2019/20 & ongoing	No of sites improved. Change to quality score.
31	Develop a strategic approach to addressing poor perceptions relating to the quality of play provision.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Communications Team	2020/21	Household / User Survey.
32	Address qualitative deficiencies in playing pitch provision as identified in the (revised 2018) playing pitch strategy.	Sport & Active Recreation	Planning Policy, Streetpride & Greenspaces	2019/20 & ongoing	No of sites improved. Change to quality score.
33	Work with other landowners to address low quality green spaces as identified through the quality assessment.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Other landowners	2020/21	No of sites improved. Change to quality score.
34	Carry out a Green Flag based audit at the end of the strategy period to measure change against the baseline data (2017).	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Planning Policy	2022/23	Quality assessment completed. Comparison of data with 2017 baseline.
35	Work in partnership to deliver the recommendations of the Sub-regional Green Infrastructure Strategy to safeguard and enhance biodiversity assets and create greater connectivity to form core areas and large functional clusters.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Planning Policy, WCC, WWT	2019/20 & ongoing	No of improvement projects delivered.
36	Maintain and strengthen the partnership with WWT and develop projects to address priority species and	Streetpride & Greenspaces	WWT, Greenspace & Heritage Forum	2019/20 & ongoing	No of improvement projects delivered.

Ref	Recommendation	Lead Organisation	Delivery Partners	Timescale	Performance Measure
	habitats as set out in the Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Local Biodiversity Action Plan.				
37	Seek to improve access to and promote blue & green corridors as important linear routes including those of the Coventry Canal, River Sowe and Sherbourne corridors.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Flood Risk Management & Drainage team, Canal & River Trust, WWT	2019/20 & ongoing	No of improvement projects delivered.
38	Seek funding for the River Sherbourne Living Landscape Project in partnership with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust.	WWT	Streetpride & Greenspaces, Flood Risk Management & Drainage team	2019/20	External funding secured. Delivery of project outcomes.
39	Continue to promote the Coventry Canal Art Trail and seek opportunities to expand this into adjacent green spaces and communities.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Canal & River Trust, Coventry Canal Society	2020/21	No of additional art features. Usage statistics.
40	Implement the findings of the Urban Forestry Strategy to protect and enhance the city's rich heritage of street trees, urban forestry and woodlands alongside the implementation of this strategy.	Urban Forestry team	Streetpride & Greenspaces, Highways, Coventry Tree Wardens	2019/20 & ongoing	Production of strategy. Delivery of action plan.
41	Working in partnership with other landowners (and residents) and subject to funding, consider an aspiration for planting a tree for every citizen in the city.	Urban Forestry team	Streetpride & Greenspaces, Greenspace & Heritage Forum	2019/20 & ongoing	No. of trees planted.
42	Identify projects and opportunities to contribute to the delivery of National Pollinator framework by creating more high quality flower-rich habitats including pictorial meadows.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	WWT, Greenspace & Heritage Forum	2019/20 & ongoing	Area of land improved. No. of projects delivered.

Ref	Recommendation	Lead Organisation	Delivery Partners	Timescale	Performance Measure
43	Identify opportunity sites that provide the potential to secure funding through Biodiversity Offsetting.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Planning Policy (Ecologist), WCC	2019/20 & ongoing	Area of land improved. No. of projects delivered.
44	Continue to promote and support the Green Space and Heritage Forum.	WWT	Streetpride & Greenspaces	2019/20 & ongoing	Number of meetings held. No of participants. No. of groups attending.
45	Work with friends and community groups to develop volunteer / group action plans and identify training needs.	WWT	Streetpride & Greenspaces	2019/20 & ongoing.	Develop 3 plans per year.
46	Continue to support the Tree Warden programme and develop an action plan aligned to this strategy.	Urban Forestry team	WWT, Streetpride & Greenspaces	2019/20	Develop action plan.
47	Support the establishment of new friends and community groups where there is community interest focused on areas where there is greatest need.	WWT	Streetpride & Greenspaces	2019/20 & ongoing.	No. of groups established.
48	Develop clear guidance to support external and community based organisations using parks for events.	Park Events team	Streetpride & Greenspaces	2019/20	Guidance published.

Ref	Recommendation	Lead Organisation	Delivery Partners	Timescale	Performance Measure
49	Increase the staffing resource to develop partnerships and secure additional funding.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Planning Policy	2019/20	No of FTE posts created.
50	Explore the opportunities for community asset transfer for suitable facilities within green spaces or the whole site where this may be feasible.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Greenspace & Heritage Forum, WWT	2019/20 & ongoing	No of assets transferred to community management.
51	Sustain the number of Green Flag Awards at the current level of 5 awards and subject to funding seek to achieve further Green Flag Awards.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Greenspace & Heritage Forum	Ongoing	No. of Green Flag Awards per year.
52	Work with community partners to gain the Green Flag Community Award where there is community management of green space.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Greenspace & Heritage Forum, Whitefriars, WWT	2020/21 and ongoing	No. of Green Flag Community Awards per year.
53	Achieve the Green Flag award for London Road Cemetery following the delivery of the HLF funded restoration works.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Bereavement Services, Friends of LRC	2021/22	Green Flag award achieved.
54	Management and Maintenance Plans are a key tool in addressing green space quality at a site specific level. Develop a rolling programme for the production of new MMPs for key green space sites.	Park Development Officers	Streetpride & Greenspaces	2019/20	3 additional Plans per year.
55	Review grounds maintenance operations and seek to identify opportunities for less intensive management practices that are cost effective and deliver positive outcomes for biodiversity.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Highways team, WWT	2019/20 & annually thereafter	No. of projects implemented.

Ref	Recommendation	Lead Organisation	Delivery Partners	Timescale	Performance Measure
56	Through the management planning process ensure that accessibility of green spaces is reviewed and improved.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Disabled people's advocacy groups	2019/20 & ongoing	No. of accessibility audits carried out. Improvement projects delivered.
57	Review and update Byelaws relating to parks and green spaces.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Legal Services	2019/20	Revised Byelaws adopted.
58	Develop a method for measuring and monitoring the level of use of parks and green spaces.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Greenspace & Heritage Forum	2020/21	Usage data
59	Seek to participate in benchmarking service delivery against other family member authorities.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	West Midlands Parks Forum	2020/21 & every 2 years thereafter	Benchmark data.
60	Seek to establish a framework for green spaces to access Community Infrastructure Levy funding through the Developer Contributions SPD.	Planning Policy	Streetpride & Greenspaces	2018/19	Developer Contributions SPD adopted.
61	Seek to diversify funding streams for parks and open spaces including greater income from external funding, partnerships, commercial activities, fees and charges, and through the planning process.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Commercialisation Working Group, Greenspace & Heritage Forum	2019/20 & ongoing	Action plan developed. Income generated.
62	Promote parks and green spaces as venues for community and commercial events.	Streetpride & Greenspaces	Commercialisation Working Group, Events Team	2019/20 & ongoing	No. of events. No of spaces used for events.

8 Monitoring & Evaluation

8.1 Monitoring

The strategy will be used in the Streetpride and Green Spaces and service planning process which occurs annually.

The action plan will be monitored on a quarterly basis in order to track progress and implementation of the strategy.

It is recommended that an annual parks and green spaces summit is held to review progress and to identify priorities and opportunities for the following twelve months.

8.2 Evaluation

The green space quality assessment should be repeated in summer / autumn 2021.

The strategy will be formally reviewed and evaluated in Year 5 in March 2023.



Appendix A

Proposed Local Standards

Coventry Green Space Strategy - Proposed Local Standards

The Coventry Green Space strategy in line with the Coventry Local Plan classifies green spaces according to three broad categories : Formal; Informal and Functional. The table below shows the component types of green space within each classification.

Type of Green Space	Planning Classification
Parks and Gardens	Formal
Outdoor Sports Facilities (with unrestricted access)	
Provision for Children & Young People	
Amenity Green Space	Informal
Natural and Semi-natural Green Space	
Green Corridors	
Allotments & Community Gardens	Functional
Cemeteries & Churchyards	

The proposed Local Standards will use these three categories when considering green space provision and the need to consider new provision either onsite or offsite and in determining the need for financial contributions by developers.

FORMAL GREEN SPACE	
QUANTITY	
Current Provision	TOTAL 41 sites, 303.45 ha TOTAL 0.84 hectares per 1,000 population (2017 MYE)
Distribution of Provision	All Wards contain at least one Formal green space with unrestricted access. Eleven wards have provision that is less than the average of 0.84 ha / 1000 population.
Consultation Results	The Household Survey found that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 63.4% of respondents considered that the current amounts of parks and gardens was 'about right'. • 40.4% of respondents were satisfied with the quantity of play provision. • 12.5% of respondents were satisfied with the quantity of provision for teenagers • 36.3% of respondents considered the quantity of sports provision to be adequate <p>The following wards had the lowest levels of satisfaction with the quality of provision of Formal Green Space: Foleshill, Henley, Holbrook, Lower Stoke, Radford, St Michael's.</p>
Proposed Quantity Standard	0.84 hectares per 1,000 population (the current level of provision)
Justification	The 2008 quantity standards were based on the average supply at that time. It is proposed that a similar approach is adopted which seeks to protect the current level of provision.
QUALITY	
Current Provision	City Park – 2 sites : average 88 District level – 8 sites average 65 Neighbourhood Level – 18 sites average 51 Local level – 8 sites average 53 Overall Range 9-89 Average quality score 55
Distribution of Provision	Twelve Wards all have average quality scores below the average for Formal green space: Bablake, Binley and Willenhall, Cheylesmore, Foleshill, Henley, Holbrook, Lower Stoke, Radford, Sherbourne, Upper Stoke, Westwood, Woodlands.
Consultation Results	The Household Survey found that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70.7% of respondents were satisfied with the overall quality of parks and gardens • 29.9% of respondents were satisfied with the overall quality of outdoor sports facilities • 35.4% of respondents were satisfied with the overall quality of play provision • 11.4% of respondents were satisfied with the overall quality of provision for teenagers <p>Residents of Bablake, Cheylesmore, Earlsdon, Sherbourne, St Michaels, Wainbody, Whoberley, Woodlands and Wyken were least satisfied with the quality of formal green space. Therefore, a focused approach to increasing the quality of the lowest performing spaces would be appropriate.</p>

Proposed Quality Standard	The proposed standard is 70 (out of 100) for all Formal Green Spaces – broadly equivalent to the standard to achieve the Green Flag Award. 33 Formal green spaces are below this proposed quality standard.
Justification	All Formal Green Spaces should achieve a minimum standard equivalent to the Green Flag Award standard. The overall pass mark for the Green Flag Award is 66 out of 100 based on a desktop and field assessment process. The quality assessment was conducted only on a field assessment so a proposed quality standard of 70 is proposed.
ACCESSIBILITY	
Proposed Quantity Standard	A common standard across all green space types is proposed: All residents should be within 1200m of a District level space or All residents should be within 800m of a Neighbourhood level space or All residents should be within 400m of a Local level space
Justification	The proposed accessibility standard is based upon all residents of the borough having equality of access to an unrestricted green space of some type / significance.
Distribution of Provision / Key deficiencies	There are some areas of deficiency to District / Neighbourhood / Local level spaces across the city.

Provision for Children and Young People

Whilst Provision for Children and Young people forms part of the classification Formal Green Space, the Green Space Strategy and Local Standards do not propose a quantity standard for equipped provision for children and young people. However, the authority has adopted the Fields in Trust accessibility standards¹ as summarised below.

	Designation		Accessibility Standard
Equipped / designated play areas	LAP	Local Area for Play (and informal recreation)	100 m
	LEAP	Local Equipped Area for Play (and informal recreation)	400 m
	NEAP	Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (and informal recreation, and provision for children and young people)	1,000 m
	MUGA	Multi Use Games Area	700 m

¹ Fields in Trust (2018) – Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play : Beyond the Six Acre Standard (England)

INFORMAL GREEN SPACE	
QUANTITY	
Current Provision	TOTAL 374 sites, 754.8 ha TOTAL 2.10 hectares per 1,000 population (2017 MYE)
Distribution of Provision	All Wards across the city have a minimum of 8 Informal green spaces with unrestricted access. Eight wards have provision that is less than the average of 2.10 ha / 1000 population.
Consultation Results	The Household Survey found that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50.4% of respondents considered that the current amounts of Natural and Semi-natural Green Space was 'about right'. • 51.4% of respondents were satisfied with the quantity of Amenity Green Space. <p>The following wards had the lowest levels of satisfaction with the quality of provision of Informal Green Space: Foleshill, Henley, Holbrook, Lower Stoke, Radford, St Michael's.</p>
Proposed Quantity Standard	2.10 hectares per 1,000 population (the current level of provision)
Justification	The 2008 quantity standards were based on the average supply at that time. It is proposed that a similar approach is adopted which seeks to protect the current level of provision.
QUALITY	
Current Provision	District level – 3 sites average 40 Neighbourhood Level – 5 sites average 41 Local level – 153 sites average 39 Overall Range 9-77 Average quality score 41
Distribution of Provision	Nine Wards all have average quality scores below the average for Informal green space: Binley and Willenhall, Cheylesmore, Westwood, Holbrook, Longford, Earlsdon, Radford, Westwood, Whoberley and Wyken.
Consultation Results	The Household Survey found that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 61.2% of respondents were satisfied with the overall quality of Natural and Semi-natural Green Space • 46.0% of respondents were satisfied with the overall quality of Amenity Green Space <p>Residents of Binley and Willenhall, Foleshill, Henley, Holbrook, Longford, Lower Stoke, Radford, Sherbourne, Upper Stoke and Wyken were least satisfied with the quality of informal green space. Therefore, a focused approach to increasing the quality of the lowest performing spaces would be appropriate.</p>
Proposed Quality Standard	The proposed standard is 60 (out of 100) for all Informal Green Spaces 155 Informal green spaces are below this proposed quality standard.
Justification	All Informal Green Spaces should achieve a minimum standard equivalent of 'good' against the Green Flag Award standard which equates to 60 (out of 100). This is lower than the standard proposed for Formal Green Space.

ACCESSIBILITY	
Proposed Quantity Standard	A common standard across all green space types is proposed: All residents should be within 1200m of a District level space or All residents should be within 800m of a Neighbourhood level space or All residents should be within 400m of a Local level space
Justification	The proposed accessibility standard is based upon all residents of the borough having equality of access to an unrestricted green space of some type / significance.
Distribution of Provision / Key deficiencies	There are some areas of deficiency to District / Neighbourhood / Local level spaces across the city.

FUNCTIONAL GREEN SPACE	
QUANTITY	
Current Provision	There are 54 allotments (93.6 ha) and 13 Cemeteries and Churchyards (41.2 ha) within the city TOTAL 67 sites – 134.7 ha TOTAL 0.37 ha per 1,000 population (2017 MYE)
Distribution of Provision	Ten wards have provision that is less than the average of 0.37 ha / 1000 population.
Consultation Results	There is no consultation data about Functional Green Space
Proposed Quantity Standard	0.37 hectares per 1,000 population
Justification	The proposed standard seeks to maintain the same level of provision. However, it is recognised that the amount of provision for Functional Space is likely to be demand led as it serves specific purposes as well as providing recreational and environmental benefits.
QUALITY	
Current Provision	Relatively few Functional spaces were assessed as part of the quality assessment due to the specialist nature of the spaces.
Distribution of Provision	N/A
Consultation Results	N/A
Proposed Quality Standard	No quality standard is proposed but where there is scope to improve the quality of Functional green spaces these should be brought up to the equivalent standard of Informal Green Space i.e. 60 (out of 100).
Justification	All Informal Green Spaces should achieve a minimum standard equivalent of 'good' against the Green Flag Award standard which equates to 60 (out of 100). This is lower than the standard proposed for Formal Green Space.
ACCESSIBILITY	
Proposed Quantity Standard	All residents should be within 1200m of an allotment site.

	No accessibility standards are proposed for cemeteries and churchyards.
Justification	The distance threshold of 1200m is consistent with that proposed in the 2008 Green Space Strategy.
Distribution of Provision / Key deficiencies	There are small areas of deficiency to allotments in the following Wards: Bablake, Binley and Willenhall, Henley, Woodlands (north) and Wainbody.

Notes and assumptions

Based on dataset L1 v10 updated 13Feb19 – all sites over 0.1 ha.

These local standards are based on the mapping data as of 13 February 2019 and the proposed quantity standards are based upon 2017 Mid Year Estimates for population. The figures shown in the proposed local standards are subject to change as and when the population data is updated.

Appendix B

List of Consultees

List of Consultees

Coventry City Council

Flood Risk Management & Drainage team

Greenspaces team

Highways

Insight team

Planning Policy

Public Health

Sport & Active Recreation

Strategic Asset Management

Streetpride & Greenspaces

Urban Forestry

Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board

Green Space Strategy Task and Finish Group

Partner Organisations

Canal & River Trust

Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group

Coventry University

Environment Agency

Sport England

The Woodland Trust

University of Warwick

Warwickshire County Council

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

Whitefriars Housing Association

Community & Voluntary Sector

Access Development Group

Allesley and Coundon Wedge Conservation Society

Allesley Green Residents Association

Allesley Walled Garden

British Crown Green Bowls Association

Coventry Ambassador

Coventry Canal Basin Trust Ltd

Coventry Green Space & Heritage Forum

Coventry Older Voices

Coventry Pensioners Convention

Coventry Society

Coventry Tree Warden Network

Coventry Wheelchair Users Group

Cycling UK - Coventry

Different Strokes

Feeding Coventry

Five Acre Community Farm

Friends of Allesley Park

Friends of Caludon Castle Park

Friends of Canley Green Spaces

Friends of London Road Cemetery

Friends of Longford Park

Friends of Moat House Park

Friends of Naul's Mill Park

Friends of Sowe Valley

Friends of Spencer Park

Friends of the War Memorial Park

KiJoo

NHS Volunteer

Positive Images Festival

RAWKUS (Warwick University)

Warwick Volunteers- University of Warwick

WATCH Ltd

WEA

Wyken Waste Warriors