Parks and gardens

Introduction and definition

4.1 This type of open space (as defined by PPG17) includes urban parks and formal gardens that provide opportunities for various informal recreation and community events.

4.2 Parks usually contain a variety of facilities and amenities, including some that fall within different classifications of open space, e.g. children's play facilities, sport pitches and wildlife areas. In Hull, many of the parks double up as recreation grounds and will therefore be considered when analysing the distribution of both parks and outdoor sports facilities.

4.3 For classification purposes, the different open spaces within parks have been separated according to the PPG17 typology under which they most appropriately fall. Large green areas, footpaths, lakes and less dense woodland will provide the park area (total hectares) and play facilities for children and young people will be considered separately. This ensures that open space sites are not counted twice within the PPG17 assessment. The same principle has been followed for recreation grounds, although where sites are primarily pitches, they will be considered in the analysis of parks and sports pitches.

4.4 Parks provide a sense of place for the local community and help to address social inclusion issues within wider society. According to the Park Life Report (published June 2007), 83% of those questioned feel that parks are a focal point of community life. Parks also provide an important recreational resource, and many residents enjoy visiting parks to walk or to undertake more physical exercise.

4.5 The Active People survey (Sport England 2007) reveals that walking is the most popular recreational activity for people in England. Over 8 million adults aged 16 and over completed a recreational walk for at least 30 minutes in the last four weeks. Provision of parks therefore represents a key opportunity to increase levels of physical activity across the local population. This is recognised within the Hull City Council Sport and Physical Activity Strategy, which views increasing the use of parks as central to the achievement of the objective of increased physical activity.

4.6 In addition to the recreational opportunities provided by parks, these large green spaces provide structural and landscaping benefits to the surrounding local area. They also frequently offer ecological benefits. The provision of parks to break up urban landscapes is becoming increasingly important, particularly in light of growing fears regarding climate change and the role that provision of green space can play in reducing this impact.

4.7 Parks also frequently offer ecological benefits, particularly in more urban areas. The provision of parks to break up urban landscapes is becoming increasingly important, particularly in light of growing fears regarding climate change. Appropriate provision of green space can contribute to a reduction of the impact of climate change.

4.8 Ecological site assessments also demonstrate that some parks and recreation grounds in Hull play a valuable role in the provision of habitats and are essential in the green infrastructure and connectivity of the city.
East Park

Strategic context

4.9 A national survey commissioned by Sport England, the Countryside Agency and English Heritage was undertaken during 2003, studying the provision of parks within England. The aims of the survey were to establish:

- how many adults in England use parks?
- what activities people take part in when visiting parks?
- the reasons why people visit particular parks
- the levels of satisfaction with the amenities on offer
- why non-users do not use parks?

4.10 The definition of a park used in the survey was very broad and included both formal provision such as town parks, country parks, recreation grounds and also less formal provision such as village greens and common land.

4.11 The findings of the study were:

- just under two-thirds of adults in England had visited a public park during the previous 12 months
- there is a distinct bias in the use of parks by social groups, with almost three-quarters of adults from the higher social group visiting a park compared with only half of those from the lower social group
- people from black and ethnic minority communities also have relatively low participation as well as those adults with a disability
- over 8 in 10 adults who had used a park in the previous 12 months did so at least once a month during the spring and summer with almost two-thirds visiting a park at least once a week, and women tended to visit parks more often than men
it is estimated that the 24.3 million adults who use parks make approximately 1.2 billion visits during the spring and summer months and 600 million visits during the autumn and winter months – a total of 1.8 billion visits a year

the most popular type of park visited was an urban or city park.

4.12 It is clear that the benefits that the provision of parks can offer are now recognised on a national scale. There are also a number of regional and local documents that refer to the importance of parks and gardens. The key issues arising from these documents and the links with this study are set out in Table 4.1 overleaf.
Table 4.1 – Strategic Context – regional and local

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Reviewed</th>
<th>Summary of key strategic drivers</th>
<th>Links to open space, sport and recreation study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Hull Local Plan (2000)      | **Policy ME1** states that development that is sustainable and respects environmental constraints will be supported. Chapter six of the Local Plan covers the natural environment and identifies the protection and enhancement of the natural environment as a key feature of the City Plan. **Policy NE1** protects Urban Greenspace identified on the proposals map (0.25 hectares and above) from development. Development will not be permitted if it results in the following:  
  - loss of sport and recreation facilities  
  - an adverse effect on nature conservation  
  - loss of links between other areas of Urban Greenspace  
  - an adverse effect on the amenity and character of the area. **Policy NE13** protects the Green Network identified on the proposals map from development. **Policy NE21** supports the management and enhancement of Urban Greenspace for the benefit of the community and wildlife. **Policy BE1** states developments should be acceptable in terms of their relationship to existing natural features and retaining existing Urban Greenspace. **Policy BE6** requires developers to provide a good standard of landscape that protects existing natural features. | The local plan advocates the protection of existing urban greenspace and promotes the provision of new sites within new developments. |
| Hull Biodiversity Action Plan | The vision for parks, golf courses and cemeteries is to improve wildlife-friendly management                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
Consultation – Assessing Local Needs

4.13 Consultation undertaken as part of the study highlighted that:

- parks are highly valued across the community. The wide range of facilities available at this type of open space was seen as particularly important and perceived to provide a wide range of recreational opportunities for residents

- 58% of respondents to the household survey identify parks and gardens as their favourite open space in Hull, 58% of respondents also state that they visit a park at least once a month. Only 13% of respondents never visit parks at all. Parks were also a key theme of the drop in sessions, with many residents indicating that they visit these sites frequently

- 27% of young people and 28% of children indicated that parks were their favourite type of open space, meaning that parks were the most popular of all typologies. The range of facilities and amenities offered in parks was a particularly attractive feature

- the wider benefits of parks are far reaching, and it is evident that many residents use parks for informal recreation and walks, reinforcing the health benefits that these spaces offer

- consultation reinforces a particular focus on the quality of provision, rather than the expectation that additional parks would be provided. Several examples of good practice were referred to and residents indicate that they are willing to travel further to higher quality parks.

Current Position – Quantity

4.14 East Park and West Park are the two largest city parks. As their names imply, they are located in the east and west sides of the city.

4.15 Recreation grounds in Hull also act as parks, with many sites offering a variety of opportunities and being the focal point for the local neighbourhood. For the purposes of this assessment, recreation grounds offering a variety of opportunities including sports facilities and play facilities have been allocated as parks. Their role will also be considered during the evaluation of outdoor sports provision.

4.16 The quantity of parks and gardens across Hull is summarised in Table 4.2.
### Table 4.2 – Provision of parks and gardens across Hull

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Current provision</th>
<th>Number of sites</th>
<th>Number of sports parks</th>
<th>Smallest site (hectares)</th>
<th>Largest site (Hectares)</th>
<th>Scenario a Provision per 1000 population (2026)</th>
<th>Scenario b Provision per 1000 population (2026)</th>
<th>Scenario c Provision per 1000 population (2026)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carr</td>
<td>14.85</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>10.25</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park</td>
<td>57.55</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13.33</td>
<td>44.22</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverside</td>
<td>20.14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>9.87</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>22.95</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>14.79</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyke</td>
<td>11.02</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>8.88</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>127.15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>44.22</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.17 The key issues emerging from Table 4.2 and consultations relating to the quantity of provision of formal parks across the city include:

- respondents to the household survey express an overall satisfaction with the provision of parks and gardens, with 58% of residents stating that provision is about right
- findings within the individual analysis areas are consistent with the citywide results, with the majority of residents in six of the seven areas stating that provision is sufficient. The greatest level of dissatisfaction is portrayed in the Northern area, where the majority of residents indicate provision is insufficient (44%)
- it can be seen that in terms of the number of sites, parks are unevenly distributed across the city with the majority of sites located in the Riverside area (7). No parks are located within the Northern area
- the greatest current provision and provision per 1000 population is found in the Park area. It is within this area where the largest site is located (44.22 hectares)
- the lowest current provision and provision per 1000 population is located in the Northern area
- 28% of respondents to the IT young people’s survey state that the provision of parks is sufficient
residents at drop-in sessions identify the provision of parks and gardens in Hull as sufficient, with several sites highlighted as being strategically important (e.g. East Park, Pearson Park). The protection of parks and gardens is identified as being of particular priority.

- the provision of parks and gardens is perceived to be sufficient by 52% of respondents to the officer questionnaire.

### Setting provision standards – quantity

4.18 The recommended local quantity standard for parks and gardens has been derived from the local needs consultation and audit of provision and is summarised below. Full justifications for the standards are provided within Appendix F.

4.19 In line with the key themes emerging from statistical and subjective consultation, the standard for parks and gardens is set at the existing level of provision, reflecting the overall satisfaction with provision and the higher emphasis on the quality of sites.

4.20 The figures included within the quantity standard for parks and gardens include only parks where the primary purpose of the site is a park. Recreation grounds which serve as parks, but are predominantly made up of pitches, are calculated as part of the outdoor sports facilities standard. This ensures that sites are not double counted. These sites will be considered as part of the application of the accessibility standard.

### Quantity Standard – Parks and gardens (see Appendices E and F – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing level of provision</th>
<th>Recommended standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.50 hectares per 1000</td>
<td>0.50 hectares per 1000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Justification**

The value of parks and gardens in Hull was highlighted with many residents highlighting that the protection of parks and gardens is particularly important. The majority of respondents to the household survey regard the provision of parks and gardens to be sufficient (64%) and findings within six of the seven individual analysis areas support this perception reinforcing a general satisfaction with the current provision of parks and gardens in Hull. This suggests that there are limited expectations in terms of further provision. Furthermore, local consultation focused more on quality rather than quantity of parks and gardens with some residents identifying the need for improved maintenance and other qualitative improvements. This focus was evident across all consultations.

Therefore, in light of the general satisfaction with the current provision of parks and gardens and the need to protect existing sites, it is recommended that the local standard is set at the existing level of provision. This standard should be treated as a minimum level of provision. While it is equivalent to the overall quantity of provision across the city, this standard will also enable the identification of locational deficiencies when combined with the application of the accessibility standard.

Setting a standard at this level will allow a focus on improving the quality of existing parks and gardens in Hull and will also ensure that existing provision is protected through the LDF.
Current provision - quality

4.21 The quality of existing parks and gardens in the city was assessed through site visits and is summarised in Table 4.3. It is important to note that site assessments are conducted as a snapshot in time and are therefore reflective of the quality of the site on one specific day. All sites which function as a park (including those considered under other types of open space within the quantity standard calculations) are included in this table.

4.22 The quality scores are weighted according to the findings of the local consultation (as discussed in Section 2). Those elements that were highlighted through consultation as being a particularly important determinant of the quality of a park have been weighted higher. This ensures that they have a greater influence on the overall quality score that each site achieves. The full rationale behind this approach is set out in Appendix G.

4.23 The Green Flag Award is a national standard for parks and greenspace. East Park and Oak Road Playing Fields are the only parks in the city that have achieved this status.

4.24 As part of the East Park regeneration lottery funding, the Lottery Commission proposed the setting up of The Friends of East Park group, set up from residents of the Park area of the city. The aim of the group is to help with fundraising and to help out at events run by the East Park ranger team. Such involvement helps to establish a sense of ownership amongst the local community. There are also Friends Groups at Pickering Park and Pearson Park.

Table 4.3 – Quality of parks and gardens across Hull

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Range of quality scores (%)</th>
<th>Average quality scores (%)</th>
<th>Lowest quality sites</th>
<th>Highest quality sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>72–77</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>Alderman Kneeshaw Recreation Ground</td>
<td>Sperrin Gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>64–78</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Dane Park</td>
<td>Oak Road Playing Fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carr</td>
<td>74–88</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>Lambwath Park</td>
<td>Heartlands Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park</td>
<td>82–92</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>Pelican Park</td>
<td>East Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverside</td>
<td>58–86</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Mason Street Gardens</td>
<td>Queens Gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>72–94</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>Gower Park</td>
<td>Pickering Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyke</td>
<td>58–100</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>Mayfield Community Gardens</td>
<td>Pearson Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>58–94</td>
<td>79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The key issues emerging from Table 4.3 and the consultation relating to the quality of parks are:

- the majority of respondents to the household survey feel the quality of parks and gardens is good (65%) while 28% of residents feel the quality of parks and gardens is average. This indicates that the overall level is satisfaction is high.

- the overall perception of the quality of parks is reflected in the findings of the site assessments. The average score of 79% achieved by parks is one the highest of all typologies. The variation in quality evident in other typologies is less obvious in parks, with the site assessment scores ranging from 58–94. Only four sites achieved a score of below 70%.

- results across the individual analysis areas are consistent with the overall findings. The highest levels of satisfaction are found in the Park analysis area where 77% of respondents feel that the quality of provision is good. Site assessments reveal that the quality is actually highest in this area. The lowest levels of satisfaction are found in the North Carr analysis area where only 45% of respondents feel that the quality of provision is good. Site assessments suggest that Riverside contains the lowest quality sites overall, with an average score of 71%.

- site assessments reveal that almost all sites were well maintained with clearly defined boundaries. Key opportunities identified for further enhancement included:
  - the provision of toilets
  - provision of additional seating
  - increased numbers of benches.

- at drop-in sessions, parks were generally perceived to be good quality but were thought to suffer from a lack of regular maintenance, although residents recognised that a reason for the poor maintenance of some parks may be due to the recent floods. Queens Gardens and East Park were highlighted as examples of high quality sites in Hull.

- 49% of respondents to the young people’s IT survey stated that the quality of parks is only average and indicated that these sites were in need of improvement. There is potential that the use of the word ‘parks’ by young people also encompasses play areas.

- 48% of children who identified parks and gardens as their favourite open space indicated that the main issues at these sites were litter and untidiness and boring play facilities.

- the findings of the survey for young people mirrored the responses of children, with 71% of respondents who stated that parks and gardens are their favourite open space indicating that litter and untidiness and boring facilities were the two areas for improvement in parks.
In addition to the recreational value of parks, many are particularly valuable in terms of nature conservation and biodiversity. Six sites were assessed as part of the ecological assessments. Key conclusions drawn from these visits reinforced the ecological value of these open spaces, concluding that:

- All of the sites exhibited highly diverse habitats and species. Although West Park was the only park not to be given a high diversity rating this site was perceived to be particularly important in terms of its contribution to the linkages and wildlife corridors across the city.


- The main habitats provided across the city parks include freshwater, grass, parkland and woodland. Recurring species include lichens, house martins, mute swans, song thrushes, house sparrows and linnets.

- Rare species and habitats were identified at East Park, Holderness House and Alderman Kneeshaw Recreation Ground.

Setting provision standards – quality

The recommended local quality vision for parks and gardens is summarised below. Full justifications and consultation relating to the quality of provision for the local standard is provided within Appendix G.

The aspirations are derived directly from the findings of local consultations. The quality standard for a park is set at 86.5%, the minimum score required to fall within the top quartile.

Quality standard (see Appendix G)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended standard – PARKS AND GARDENS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local consultation, national guidance and best practice suggest that the following features are essential and desirable to local residents:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential</th>
<th>Desirable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clean/litter free</td>
<td>Appropriately well kept grass dependant on usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flowers and trees</td>
<td>Nature features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toilets (dependant on the size of the park)</td>
<td>Facilities for the young</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Detailed analysis of the local consultation suggests that with regards to parks, the relative importance of the key components is shown below. These scores have been used to weight the site assessments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component of quality</th>
<th>Proportion of possible total responses received</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Security and Safety</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleanliness and maintenance</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetation</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancillary accommodation</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION 4 – PARKS AND GARDENS

Setting provision standards – accessibility

4.29 The accessibility of sites is paramount in maximising usage as well as providing an opportunity for people to use the site. The recommended local standard is set in the form of a distance threshold and is derived directly from the findings of the local consultations.

4.30 Site specific accessibility issues were also analysed as part of the site visits, where information and signage, transport and general access issues were assessed.

4.31 Consultation and analysis has shown that the key issues with regards accessibility are:

- walking is identified as the most appropriate mode of travel to reach parks and gardens. 59% of users currently walk while 29% drive.

- similar to the findings indicated by current users, 62% of respondents to the household survey expect to walk and 18% prefer to drive. The findings within the individual Areas are consistent with the overall results

- at drop-in sessions the large number of parks in Hull is recognised, with a significant amount of residents stating parks are easily accessible

- findings of site assessments reveal that while on the whole parks are easily accessible, scores range from 46% to 100% indicating that some improvements are required. While many sites were perceived to be easily accessible with numerous entrances and well signed, others were considered to be poorly signed. The location of the majority of parks in close proximity to major routes was perceived to enhance accessibility.

4.32 On the whole, the larger parks were perceived to be destinations for a day out or longer trip as well as a local resource of amenity. It was perceived that larger sites containing a variety of facilities may attract users from a wider catchment area. Residents of the west of Hull for example indicated that they frequently travel to east Hull to use East Park. This is a reflection of the quality of the site and the facilities on offer.

4.33 The recommended local accessibility standard for parks and gardens is summarised below. Full justification for the local standard is provided within Appendix H. The standard is reflective of local aspirations with regards travel time, as well as the focus on improving the quality of parks and gardens across the city.
Accessibility Standard – Parks and gardens (see Appendix H)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>20 MINUTE WALK TIME</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Justification**

There is an emphasis in favour of walking to parks and gardens both in terms of current (59%) and expected (62%) travel patterns. Therefore a walk time standard has been set. The standard has been set at a 20 minute (960 metres) walk time to local parks and gardens, based on the third quartile. This figure was consistent across all areas. While the average response 14 minutes, setting the standard at 20 minutes provides a more realistic target and will ensure a strategic distribution of facilities. This will enable a focus on the delivery of higher quality facilities rather than a concentration of smaller and poorly equipped parks. Appropriate access to parks and gardens will be instrumental in the delivery of targets to increase physical activity and health and the standard set should be considered a minimum standard.

**Applying provision standards**

4.34 The application of the recommended quantity, quality and accessibility standards is essential in understanding the existing distribution of parks and identifying areas where provision is insufficient to meet local need. While it is important to consider the application of each standard in isolation, in reality they should be considered in the context of each other.

4.35 The application of the local quantity standard for each area is set out in Table 4.4. The table illustrates the application of the standard against the current provision, and the likely implications of each of the three projected growth scenarios. All figures used in the application of the standards have been rounded to two decimal places.
Table 4.4 – Application of quantity standard – Parks and gardens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Current balanced against local standard (0.50 hectares per 1000 population)</th>
<th>Future balanced against local standard - Scenario a (0.50 hectares per 1000 population)</th>
<th>Future balanced against local standard - Scenario b (0.50 hectares per 1000 population)</th>
<th>Future balanced against local standard - Scenario c (0.50 hectares per 1000 population)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>-17.95</td>
<td>-17.73</td>
<td>-18.29</td>
<td>-18.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>-16.38</td>
<td>-16.19</td>
<td>-16.67</td>
<td>-17.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carr</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park</td>
<td>35.34</td>
<td>35.60</td>
<td>34.93</td>
<td>34.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverside</td>
<td>-2.45</td>
<td>-2.18</td>
<td>-2.85</td>
<td>-3.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyke</td>
<td>-4.33</td>
<td>-4.15</td>
<td>-4.60</td>
<td>-5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>-2.23</td>
<td>-5.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Green = above the standard, Red = below the standard.

4.36 As can be seen in Table 4.4 above:

- overall there is adequate provision of parks and gardens to meet current demand. In the event of population scenario a, the existing provision will remain sufficient to meet demand
- if the population is to increase as projected in scenarios b and c, the application of the quantity standard indicates that there will be a shortfall of 2.23 hectares by 2026 (Scenario b) or 5.61 hectares if higher growth occurs
- based on the application of the quantity standard, only the North Carr, Park and West areas have sufficient provision to meet current and future demand
- the greatest expected future shortfall is found within the East area, where a shortfall of 18.80 hectares is anticipated by 2026 (Scenario c).

4.37 In light of the wide catchment of parks and gardens, locational quantitative deficiencies should be treated as being of limited significance unless the deficiency is sufficiently large to justify the development of a new park. The overall shortfall of over five hectares suggests that new provision may be required by 2026 in the event of the high growth scenario.

4.38 The application of the local accessibility standards for parks and gardens is set out overleaf in Map 4.1. Consideration is given to the interrelationship between parks and amenity green spaces in Map 4.2.
Map 4.1 - Provision of parks and gardens in Hull
4.39 Map 4.1 indicates that when including recreation grounds which also act as parks, there is a comprehensive distribution across the city. There are few areas where residents do not have access to a park within the recommended 20 minute walk time.

Applying the quantity, quality and accessibility standards

4.40 In order to identify geographical areas of importance and those areas where there is potential unmet demand, we apply both the quantity and accessibility standards together. The quantity standards identify whether areas are quantitatively above or below the recommended minimum standard. The accessibility standards will help to determine where those deficiencies are of high importance. Consideration should also be given to the quality of existing provision.

4.41 Parks can play a key role in providing informal sport and recreation opportunities for local residents. Many residents who do not wish to participate in formal sports can participate in lighter physical activity in parks. This will increase in importance in light of the ageing population. Encouraging people to use parks will therefore be central to the achievement of objectives to increase physical activity. Ensuring that parks are of sufficient quality to attract local users will be central to this.

Maximise the role that parks can play in striving to increase participation in health and physical activity across the city by effectively promoting these opportunities.
Continue to promote activities and alternative means of exercise at parks to maximise usage.

4.42 While the value of parks and the wider benefits that can stem from the provision of parks are clear, if the above targets are to be successful, it is essential that facilities are of appropriate quality and that the distribution of facilities is sufficient to provide all residents with opportunities.

4.43 The local quantity standard has been set at the existing level of provision. This places an emphasis on improving the quality of parks and ensuring that they are accessible, functional open spaces which meet the needs of local residents.

4.44 The quality of sites was perceived to be a particular issue in Hull, with many residents indicating that while there is sufficient green space, the quality and functionality of these sites is poor. This was a key message arising throughout consultations and was also inherent in consultations undertaken as part of the Newington and St Andrews Area Action Plan.

4.45 As highlighted, residents particularly value East Park and this site attracts visitors from across the city, as well as from East Riding. Some residents travel across the city to visit East Park rather than using their local amenity. Consultation indicates that it is the quality of East Park and the array of facilities provided within the park that draws visitors.

4.46 Priority should therefore be given to ensuring that high quality facilities are provided in each area of the city.
4.47 Site assessments indicate that while the overall quality of parks is good, many sites have potential to be high quality facilities. Suggested improvements included the provision of toilets, increased amount of seating and more flowers. Some sites were also perceived to require lighting.

4.48 In addition to addressing the recreational needs of residents through the provision of high quality parks, it is essential to maximise the impact that parks and other open spaces can have on the provision of habitats and nature conservation in the city. It will be important to conserve the species that are already evident as well as ensuring that parks are sympathetically managed to facilitate a balance between recreation and biodiversity.

4.49 Sites containing high quality grasslands, which includes some parks, in particular should be managed with conservation in mind. Ecological assessments conclude that conservation management should be prioritised at Haworth Hall and Holderness House. Although considered within the natural and semi-natural open space section of this report, to an extent these sites complement the parks and gardens in the city.

| PG2 | Seek to develop and enhance existing parks to ensure that they meet both local and regional needs. Drive a structured programme of improvements with clear defined outputs which builds on the success of East Park. This may include the production of parks management plans and an updated strategy. The strategy should focus on the provision of a high quality park in each area of the city. The role of parks in biodiversity and nature conservation should be integrated within these plans. Strive to achieve the recommended quality vision of a site assessment score of 87% at all sites across the city. |

4.50 In order to achieve parks of a high quality, it will be essential that partnership working continues. There are four active Friends Groups in the city who continue to offer help and support on specific sites. Vandalism, security and safety were highlighted as key issues for residents. Local community involvement can be instrumental in generating a culture of respect and encouraging residents to value the local resources. This will have a knock on effect on the quality of open spaces.

| PG3 | Promote and support community involvement in parks and gardens. |

4.51 While there is a focus on the quality of parks and ensuring that the wider opportunities these sites offer are maximised, it is important to ensure that all residents are within the appropriate catchment area of a park. This is particularly important in light of the emphasis placed on parks during local consultation. Residents indicated that they are willing to travel further to higher quality parks, with a wider range of facilities.

4.52 Map 4.2 overleaf illustrates the provision of parks and gardens in the context of amenity green space in the area. Amenity green space can play a key role in the delivery of local open space to residents; however the provision of local amenity green space does not negate the need for more formalised provision, such as a park.
Map 4.2 - Provision of parks and gardens and amenity green space in Hull

Amenity greenspace with Parks
4.53 The presence of amenity green space in areas deficient of parks provides an opportunity to formalise these spaces to better meet the needs of local residents.

4.54 Where parks are provided within a 10 minute catchment (the recommended distance threshold for amenity green space as set in Section 6) they may negate the need for further provision of amenity green space (as a higher order facility they provide a greater range of facilities) as they fulfil similar roles. This is discussed in Section 6.

4.55 In light of the importance of existing parks and gardens, consideration should be given to the protection of such sites through Local Development Framework Policy.

Incorporate a policy within the Local Development Framework which facilitates the protection of parks across Hull.

PG4

4.56 In order to maximise the benefit of new parks, any new facilities should be targeted in locations that are currently lacking in provision. Moreover, in order to ensure that the maximum number of residents are within the accessibly catchment of parks and gardens, any new site should be located so that there is no overlap with the catchment of existing parks. While across the city there is currently sufficient provision to meet the needs of residents in quantitative terms, population growth will mean that additional provision is likely to be required over the LDF period.

4.57 It must also be noted that while for the purposes of this assessment all facilities will be assumed to have a 20 minute walk time catchment, in reality some sites (in particular East Park) do draw residents from further afield and from outside the local authority boundary. It is however important that all residents have access to a facility within a 20 minute walk time, as well as facilitating access by sustainable modes of transport to larger sites. This should include ensuring that parks are located on public transport routes as well as maximising green linkages between sites.

Facilitate access to parks across the city by ensuring that parks are located on public transport routes as well as maximising green linkages between sites.

PG5

4.58 The analysis that follows considers the provision of parks within each of the geographical areas of the city and highlights where future priorities should lie in each of the seven areas. While this provides a local level overview of provision, consideration should be given to the most appropriate strategy for parks on a city wide level.

4.59 While the overall strategy should focus on improving the quality of key sites, if the overall aim of ensuring that all residents are within 20 minutes of a quality park is to be achieved, qualitative improvements will be required at sites across the city, as well as new provision as the population grows.
East area

4.60 Application of the quantity standard indicates that there are insufficient parks and gardens to meet current and future demand.

4.61 Despite this, when also taking into account the multi-facility recreation grounds, it can be seen that accessibility mapping demonstrates that the majority of residents within the East area are able to access a park or garden within the recommended 20 minute walk time. This reinforces the importance of the recreation grounds.

4.62 The even distribution of parks and recreation grounds suggests that in the short term, improvements to the quality and functionality of existing sites are more important. Longer term, in the event of high population growth, new provision may be required.

4.63 Site assessments indicate that the quality of parks and gardens in the East area is good and sites have an average of 75%. Alderman Kneeshaw Recreation Ground, the largest site in this area, is the lowest scoring site. Key areas for improvement identified during site visits include:

- Alderman Kneeshaw Recreation Ground – improvements to the planting, renovation of facilities as some areas appear to be run down – this site was also identified as having a high biodiversity value – the balance between conservation and recreation should therefore be maintained
- Sperrin Close Gardens – improved maintenance as site is currently overgrown in places.

PG6 In light of the even distribution of parks within the East area of the city, effort should focus on qualitative improvements to existing sites.

Northern area

4.64 There are no parks located within the Northern area. Application of the quantity standard for the Northern area demonstrates that there is a shortfall of provision, equivalent to 16.38 hectares. This is likely to increase in line with population growth.

4.65 Accessibility mapping illustrates this shortfall as it can be seen that there is a cluster of residents in the University ward outside of the appropriate catchment area of a park (Figure 4.1). To an extent this deficiency is of minimal significance as the University of Hull Playing Fields is located within this area, although while this site may also serve as informal open space for students, it is likely to be inaccessible to the majority of residents, particularly for informal use. There are however further playing fields just to the west of the Hull city boundary. This deficiency however is adjacent to deficiencies in the Wyke area. New provision in the south of the University ward (potentially delivered by upgrading an amenity space) should therefore be considered.
4.66 In addition, it must however be noted that Princess Elizabeth Playing Fields are located within the Northern area. This site currently plays an important role in meeting local needs. It is anticipated that the function of this site may change as part of the BSF programme.

4.67 While the supply of parks is lower in the Northern area than in other areas of the city, when amalgamating amenity green space and parks and gardens, accessibility mapping reveals that all residents have access to either an amenity green space or park or garden within the recommended accessibility thresholds (Figure 4.2). Even if Princess Elizabeth Playing Fields is removed from the equation, all residents still have access to informal open space. The majority of the amenity spaces are however small in size and have limited functionality.
4.68 As a higher order facility, it is important that residents have access to parks and gardens within the appropriate catchment. Consideration should therefore be given to upgrading an existing amenity space. Additionally, in the event of the loss of Princess Elizabeth Playing Fields, new provision may be required.

4.69 Any new site should meet recommended quality criteria. In light of deficiencies in this area of the city, efforts should also focus on the development of improved green linkages, which facilitates travel for local residents.

4.70 Given the lower levels of provision in the Northern area, the quality of sites is of higher significance. The average quality score in the Northern area was 73% and the range of facilities was 64–78%. The highest scoring site was Oak Road Playing Fields.

4.71 Site assessments revealed that key opportunities for improvement at sites within this area focused around improved maintenance. At the time of site visits litter was evident, although there were plenty of benches and bins.

4.72 In order to ensure that a high quality facility is provided in all areas of the city, particular focus should be placed on maintaining and improving the quality of Oak Road Playing Fields, which has already achieved a green flag award.

| PG 7 | Maintain and enhance the quality of Oak Road Playing Fields to ensure the provision of a high quality facility in the Northern area. Improve other facilities across the Northern area. Address deficiencies in access to parks through the provision of a new site or upgrading an existing amenity space. In the event of the loss of Princess Elizabeth Playing Fields, alternative park provision should be secured. |
North Carr area

4.73 Application of the quantity standard indicates that there is sufficient provision of parks and gardens to meet current and future demand. Accessibility mapping supports this sufficient provision illustrating that the majority of residents in the North Carr area have access to a park or garden within the recommended 20 minute walk time.

4.74 Despite a good level of accessibility to parks and gardens, a number of residents located in the north of the Kings Park and Bransholme East wards do not have access to a park or garden (Figures 4.3 and 4.4).

Figure 4.3 – Deficiencies of parks and gardens in the Kings Park ward

Figure 4.4 – Deficiencies of parks and gardens in the Bransholme East ward
SECTION 4 – PARKS AND GARDENS

4.75 The provision of amenity green space in the North Carr area is sufficient to meet current and future demand. When combining parks and gardens and amenity green space, all residents have access to at least one of these typologies. In light of deprivation in the Bransholme area, local access to parks and gardens is important. Should the opportunity arise, consideration should therefore be given to upgrading a small amenity space in the area deficient in parks to fulfil the role of a community garden.

4.76 Site assessments reveal that the quality of existing sites in North Carr is good, and site assessment scores range from 74–88%. The quality of sites in this area should therefore be maintained and improved. Site assessment scores indicate potential areas of improvement including:

- Lambwath Park – increased provision of bins and benches. Additional signage would also be beneficial
- Heartlands Park – provision of toilets
- Noddle Hill Playing Fields – no signage provided

4.77 Additionally, the Ennerdale Playing Fields site was considered to be a poor and underused site that has the potential to become a very high quality and highly valued site.

Maintain and improve the quality of existing sites in the North Carr area. Identify opportunities to upgrade an amenity space to a small formal park / garden in the Bransholme area of the city.

Park area

4.78 The highest quantity of parks and gardens is found in the Park area and application of the quantity standard reveals that there is adequate provision to meet current and future demand. Accessibility mapping reinforces the adequacy of this provision, with nearly all residents able to access a park or garden within the recommended 20 minute walk time.

4.79 Only a small number of residents in the south of the Marfleet ward are outside of the catchment area for a park. Provision of an additional park in this area should not be considered a priority as the number of residents in the area of deficiency would be insufficient to warrant additional provision. Furthermore, these residents do have access to amenity space.

4.80 East Park is located within the Park area. This site is widely recognised as an example of good practice across the city. When taking into account the quality of all parks and recreation grounds within the East area, it is clear that the quality is high. The average site assessment score is 87% and scores range from 82% to 92%.

4.81 In light of the abundance of parks in the area, the future emphasis should be on continuing to maintain the quality and functionality of parks and gardens, in line with the quality vision. Opportunities should also be taken to further enhance the green infrastructure in this area of the city.

Maintain the focus on qualitative improvements to existing parks and gardens within the Park area.
Riverside area

4.82 Accessibility mapping reveals that there is an even distribution of parks and gardens in the Riverside area. Although quantitative analysis indicates that there are insufficient parks and gardens to meet current and future demand, all residents have access to this type of open space within the recommended 20 minute walk time. This suggests that sites are well distributed but perhaps too small.

4.83 In light of the high level of access to parks and gardens in the Riverside area, the focus should be on the qualitative enhancement of existing parks and gardens. West Park is a large site which is widely considered to have the potential to become an example of good practice. Improvements to this site would reduce the amount of residents travelling from the west of the city to East Park in search of a high quality facility.

4.84 The regeneration programme within Newington and St Andrews focuses particularly on the creation of a green network. This should link residents in this area with existing parks and ensure that sites are easily accessible.

4.85 Site assessments support the focus on qualitative improvements, indicating that the quality of parks in the Riverside area is lower than in other areas of the city with an average score of just 71%. Queens Gardens, located in the city centre, was the highest scoring site and is particularly popular with local residents as well as visitors.

4.86 West Park, as the largest site in the area, should be the focus of initial investment. Improvements to the quality of this site would ensure that there is a high quality site both on the west side of the city and also locally within Riverside. It should be ensured through the City Centre Area Action Plan that the quality of Queens Gardens is maintained and improved.

4.87 Site assessments suggest that some of the key issues evident at parks in the Riverside area include:

- Litter (Queens Gardens, Mason Street Gardens)
- Lack of flowers (Victoria Park)
- Lack of lighting.

**Focus on enhancing the quality of parks and gardens in the Riverside area, striving to achieve a quality score of 89% at all sites. As the largest site in this area, West Park should be the focus of any initial investment. Enhancements to the quality of this site would ensure that there is a high quality site located on either side of the city.**

West area

4.88 Application of the quantity standard indicates that the provision of parks and gardens is adequate to meet current and future demand.

4.89 Accessibility mapping reinforces this, with the majority of residents within 20 minutes of a park. Only a few residents in Boothferry are outside of the catchment for a park, although they are located in close proximity to Costello Playing Fields. New provision would not be required in this area as the number of residents devoid of provision would be insufficient to justify the creation of a new site.
4.90 Site assessments indicate that the quality of provision in the west of Hull is good, with scores ranging from 72% to 94%. The main areas for improvement focused around improving the functionality of sites. While sites were perceived to be clean and well maintained it was felt that more opportunities could be provided.

4.91 Pickering Park is the largest site in this area and should therefore be the focus of initial investment.

4.92 In consideration of the good access and sufficient quantity when measured against local standards, the council should focus on enhancing the quality of parks and gardens in the West area.

Seek to enhance the quality of parks and gardens in the West area, particularly aiming to improve the functionality of sites.

Wyke area

4.93 Application of the accessibility standard illustrates that the majority of residents in the Wyke area have access to a park or garden within the recommended catchment. Only a small number of residents in the north of Bricknell ward do not have access to a park or garden (Figure 4.5). However, despite a high level of access to this type of open space, qualitative analysis reveals that there is inadequate provision to meet current and future demand. Based on Scenario b there will be an expected shortfall of 4.60 hectares by 2026.

Figure 4.5 – Deficiencies in the Bricknell ward

4.94 The number of residents devoid of provision is insufficient to warrant the creation of a park. Residents may also benefit from the creation of a facility in the south of the University ward (referenced in the Northern area analysis). While some additional provision may be required in the longer term in the event of population growth, the short term focus should be improvements to the quality of existing sites.
4.95 The range of quality in Wyke is higher than in some other areas of the city with scores varying from 58% to 100%. The provision of additional benches and bins, along with renewal of some ageing facilities were considered to be the main areas for improvement in Wyke. Pearson Park is the largest site in this area and initial investment should focus on this site.

Focus on improving the quality of parks within the Wyke area.

Summary

4.96 Parks and gardens are particularly valuable to local residents. Parks are one of the most frequently used open spaces in Hull by residents of all ages and all sectors of the local community. The wide range of facilities available at this type of open space is seen as particularly important and perceived to provide a wide range of recreational opportunities for residents.

4.97 The role of parks and gardens in meeting targets to increase level of physical activity and improve health should also not be underestimated. The wider benefits of parks are wide reaching.

4.98 The quality of parks and gardens is of particular importance to local residents. Many highlighted that the functionality of sites, along with the maintenance and perception of safety is of particular importance to them. Residents are willing to travel further to higher quality facilities.

4.99 When taking into account the role of recreation areas, there is an even distribution of parks across the city. Application of quantity standards suggests that currently, overall the quantity of provision is sufficient to meet demand although population growth will see demand increase and new provision may be required to meet this additional need.

4.100 While the overall strategy should focus on improving the quality of key sites, if the overall aim of ensuring that all residents are within 20 minutes of a quality park is to be achieved, qualitative improvements will be required at sites across the city, as well as new provision in some areas.

4.101 It is therefore recommended that the key priorities for the future delivery of provision of parks in Hull that should be addressed through the Hull Development Framework (HDF) and / or other delivery mechanisms, are:

- maximise the role that parks can play in striving to increase participation in health and physical activity across the city
- continue to promote activities and alternative means of exercise at parks to maximise usage
- ensure that the HDF contains policies that protect parks from development
- drive a strategic programme of qualitative improvements across the city
- facilitate access to parks through the development of public transport links to parks and the creation of green linkages.