

Chapter 4 Parks and Gardens

Introduction and Definition

- 4.1 As a consequence of the industrial revolution, public parks were a reactive policy intervention, created to alleviate the ills of the period. Their creation could be achieved quickly, and their impact was relatively immediate. They created healthier towns and cities as a result of their existence, and the grandeur of the park could be used as a measure of a city's success and status. Public parks have now become a regular part of many people's lives. Over 30 million people in England use them, making over 2 billion visits per year. 70% of people visit parks regularly, with many going every day.
- 4.2 The first public, and still best known parks in Leeds, were adapted from former private estates such as Temple Newsam, Roundhay and Lotherton Hall. Leeds is fortunate to have six large city parks compared with other UK cities, and these parks create a significant contribution to the character and environmental quality of the city.
- 4.3 This chapter will consider the existing quantity, quality and accessibility of the Parks and Gardens sites. The results of the needs assessment and other consultation results will inform the preparation and justification for the proposed standards. The proposed standards will be used to identify areas of deficiency and surplus.
- 4.4 PPG17 refers to 'parks and gardens' including urban parks, country parks and formal gardens. These are defined as accessible spaces, offering high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events.
- 4.5 For the purposes of auditing, the council have broken down this classification into local recreation ground, neighbourhood park and city park. These sub-categories relate to the functionality of the space and the potential strategic catchment.
- 4.6 Parks usually contain a variety of facilities and amenities, including some that fall within different classifications of open space. The larger city parks can perform almost all the functions of other spaces within the typology. For example, Roundhay Park contains a sports ground, allotments, golf course, extensive natural woodland areas, children's equipped play facilities, courts and greens. This site is considered a city park as it offers a wide variety of facilities and, therefore, attracts users from a city wide catchment and beyond.

Strategic Context

Leeds Unitary Development Plan (Review 2006)

- 4.7 The plan provides the existing framework for development across Leeds. The key policy areas of relevance to this study are:
 - SG6 - encourage the provision of facilities for leisure activities;
 - SP1 & 2 - protect and enhance green space provision and the countryside;

- Policy N1 & N1a protects green space and allotments identified on the proposals map;
- Policy N2 sets out the green space hierarchy:
 - Amenity 0.2 Hectares per 50 dwellings
 - Local Recreation Areas 2.8 Hectares within 400m
 - Neighbourhood/District Parks 12 Hectares within 800m
 - Major City Parks – support for additional provision where possible
- Policy N3 prioritises increasing the provision of green space in priority residential areas as identified on the proposals map;
- Policy N4 requires new residential development to deliver green space provision in regard to the green space hierarchy policy N2;
- Policy N5 establishes the council's intention to improve quantity and quality of green space either on its own or in partnership where appropriate;
- Policy N6 protects playing pitches from development as identified on the proposals map;
- Policy N7A encourages the provision and enhancement of playing pitches in areas of recognised shortfall;
- Policy N7B indicates the council will pursue opportunities to address deficiencies in playing pitch provision.

Parks and Green Space Strategy (2009) LCC Parks and Countryside

4.8 In developing the Parks and Green Space Strategy, a large scale survey was conducted with 30,000 households, targeting adults. The survey found that:

- 54% of respondents in 2006 indicated that they visit a park or open space at least once per week;
- when accessing a park or open space, 59% walk and 37% travel by car;
- the majority of respondents (83%) travel less than 15 minutes to reach their chosen park or open space;
- 67% of residents feel safe or very safe when accessing a park or open space, a further 21% did not consider it to be an issue;
- from a satisfaction perspective, the following results were identified:
 - country parks and city parks scored very highly for design and appearance, cleanliness and maintenance and the quality of trees/flowers /shrubs/ grass areas
 - the range of visitor facilities at community parks, local green spaces and recreation grounds were only deemed fair
 - the average ratings across all parks and open spaces show that respondents were least satisfied with the sports facility provision within the sites
- when looking at parks specifically, results show that Roundhay was visited most frequently by residents, followed by Temple Newsam and Golden Acre.

4.9 In the course of developing the strategy, 150 green space sites were selected for detailed quality assessment using the Green Flag standard. The majority

of sites fell below the standard. In general, the major parks achieved the standard (a score of 49), whereas, on average, community parks were well below the Green Flag standard.

4.10 The strategy developed a number of strategic aims, as listed below, and details associated objectives and desired outcomes:

- to engage the community in promoting parks and green spaces as accessible places for everyone to experience and enjoy;
- to provide good quality parks and green spaces that are well managed and provide a range of attractive facilities;
- to promote parks and green spaces as places to improve health and well-being and prevent disease through physical activity, play, relaxation and contemplation;
- to promote liveability and the economic benefits of quality parks and green space provision as an integral part of major regeneration projects;
- to engage partners in supporting and delivering the Parks and Green Space Strategy.

Consultation – Assessing Local Needs

4.11 Consultation undertaken as part of the PPG17 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;
- 50% of respondents to the household survey, and 60% of respondents to the on-street survey identify parks and gardens as their most frequently visited open space, 80% of respondents in both surveys stated that they visit a park at least once a month. Only 5% of household respondents never visit parks at all;
- the top ten most used open spaces and recreation facilities in the city are all parks;
- 28% of young people and children indicated that parks were their favourite type of open space. The range of facilities and amenities offered in parks was a particularly attractive feature. However, 34% stated there were not enough parks;
- parks are visited for exercise, contemplation and relaxation and to take children to play.

Current Provision Quantity

4.12 The largest parks in the city are Roundhay, Temple Newsam, Middleton, Golden Acre, Lotherton Hall and Kirkstall Abbey. The most popular parks measured by volume of visits per annum (in order) are Roundhay Park, Woodhouse Moor, Temple Newsam, Pudsey and Horsforth Hall (source: A Parks and Green Space Strategy for Leeds 2009).

4.13 The audit data on each of the sub categories of parks and gardens is presented in the below table. The three sub categories are also aggregated, to present a parks and garden total. The information is available by analysis area to show the spatial distribution across the city.

Table 4.1 Total provision of Parks and Gardens in Leeds by Analysis Area

| Analysis Area | Population all ages 2008 mid year estimate | Local Rec'n Area Ha | Neigh'hood Park Ha | Parks and Gardens exc. City Parks Ha. | Parks and Gardens Exc. City Parks- Ha per 1,000 pop | City Park Ha | Parks and Gardens inc. City Parks Ha. | Parks and Gardens inc. City Parks – Ha per 1,000 pop |
|------------------|--|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| East Inner | 80,578 | 18.61 | 31.4 | 50.01 | 0.62 | 0 | 50.01 | 0.62 |
| East Outer | 85,392 | 24.61 | 45.02 | 69.63 | 0.82 | 339.61 | 409.24 | 4.79 |
| North East Inner | 70,909 | 6.67 | 50.07 | 56.74 | 0.8 | 148.09 | 204.83 | 2.89 |
| North East Outer | 62,281 | 25.95 | 0.25 | 26.2 | 0.42 | 57.13 | 83.33 | 1.34 |
| North West Inner | 106,127 | 41.47 | 48.11 | 89.58 | 0.84 | 24.16 | 113.74 | 1.07 |
| North West Outer | 87,305 | 39.13 | 79.68 | 118.81 | 1.36 | 42 | 160.81 | 1.84 |
| South Inner | 74,683 | 59.63 | 30.07 | 89.7 | 1.2 | 143.07 | 232.77 | 3.12 |
| South Outer | 90,587 | 74.81 | 33.56 | 108.37 | 1.2 | 0 | 108.37 | 1.2 |
| West Inner | 50,297 | 20.91 | 73.47 | 94.38 | 1.88 | 0 | 94.38 | 1.88 |
| West Outer | 71,097 | 35.17 | 44.65 | 79.82 | 1.12 | 0 | 79.82 | 1.12 |
| Leeds | 779,256 | 346.95 | 436.28 | 783.23 | 1.01 | 754.05 | 1537.28 | 1.97 |

4.14 The key issues emerging from the above Table 4.1 and consultations relating to the quantity of provision of formal parks across the city include:

- respondents to the household survey expressed an overall satisfaction with the provision of parks and gardens, with 61% of residents stating that provision is about right as compared to 22% who stated there was not enough;
- findings within the individual analysis areas are consistent with the city wide results, with the majority of residents in all areas stating that provision is sufficient. The greatest level of dissatisfaction is in the East Inner and South Inner areas, where a significant proportion of residents indicate provision is insufficient (36% and 34% respectively). This is despite the South Inner area having one of the highest levels of provision, both including and excluding the contribution of Middleton Park (city park);
- parks are unevenly distributed across the city;
- due to their large size, city parks have a dramatic influence over the green space provision in the areas in which they are located;
- the largest city park is Temple Newsam at 340 hectares. The dramatic affect of this single space increases the provision in the

East Outer area by a factor of eight times. Consequently, the area goes from below average provision, excluding city parks (0.82 Hectares per 1,000 population), to the area with the largest provision of all parks at 4.79 Hectares per 1,000 population;

- the lowest current provision (including city parks) per 1,000 population is located in the East Inner area at 0.62 Hectares per 1,000 population;
- the areas of East Inner, East Outer, North East Inner, North East Outer, North West Inner, all have provision of less than 1 Hectares per 1,000 population (excluding city parks);
- 34% of respondents to the young people's survey state that the provision of parks is sufficient.

4.15 The below table shows how the current provision of parks and gardens in each analysis area performs when assessed against a range of possible future population projects to the year 2026. The Leeds Core Strategy uses an end date of 2026:

Table 4.2 – Provision of Parks and Gardens per 1000 Population based on the Three Population Growth Scenarios

| Analysis Area | Parks and Gardens Ha. Exc. City Parks | No. of sites | Smallest site (Ha) | Largest site (Ha) | Scenario A Provision per 1000 population (2026) | Scenario B Provision per 1000 population (2026) | Scenario C Provision per 1000 population (2026) |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|-------------------|---|---|---|
| East Inner | 50.01 | 8 | 1.96 | 20.23 | 0.53 | 0.49 | 0.51 |
| East Outer | 69.63 | 15 | 0.36 | 34.46 | 0.61 | 0.56 | 0.67 |
| North East Inner | 56.74 | 7 | 0.22 | 34.15 | 0.78 | 0.75 | 0.66 |
| North East Outer | 26.2 | 14 | 0.17 | 4.68 | 0.41 | 0.39 | 0.35 |
| North West Inner | 89.58 | 18 | 0.31 | 22.72 | 0.82 | 0.76 | 0.69 |
| North West Outer | 118.81 | 23 | 0.27 | 22.33 | 1.25 | 1.17 | 1.12 |
| South Inner | 89.7 | 20 | 0.46 | 17.3 | 0.95 | 0.76 | 0.99 |
| South Outer | 108.37 | 31 | 0.32 | 22.2 | 1.12 | 1.01 | 0.98 |
| West Inner | 94.38 | 14 | 0.28 | 34.55 | 1.82 | 1.71 | 1.54 |
| West Outer | 79.82 | 19 | 0.14 | 16.17 | 1.07 | 1.01 | 0.92 |
| Leeds | 783.23 | 169 | 0.14 | 34.55 | 0.90 | 0.83 | 0.83 |

Explanatory note:

Scenario A – Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) based on initial employment led population projection data which realigned population levels from 2001 to 2010 with locally derived data sources and projected growth based on employment projections. Distribution of future population across the city is aligned with housing units identified through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and application of selected planning policy constraints identified in the Core Strategy Preferred Approach. Average household size is derived from the SHMA assumptions.

Scenario B – Strategic Housing Market Assessment based on ONS population estimates 2001 to 2010 and ONS projections to 2026. Distribution of future population aligned with housing units identified through the SHLAA with limited planning policy constraints applied to site selection.
Scenario C – 22% increase in population of 169,700 between 2008 and 2026 using ONS population projections evenly distributed between the analysis areas.

Setting a Quantity Standard

- 4.16 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.
- 4.17 In line with the key themes emerging from the consultation, the standard for parks and gardens is set at the existing level of city wide provision, reflecting the overall satisfaction with existing provision. However, there remains an unequal distribution as highlighted above in table 4.2 and table 4.3.

Existing level of provision = 1 Hectare per 1,000 population
Proposed level of provision = 1 Hectare per 1,000 population

- 4.18 The proposed standard excludes the contribution of the six city parks. However, city parks function as neighbourhood parks, recreation grounds and amenity space at a local level. To exclude them entirely would introduce another data skew. Proximity of city parks to local communities will be considered in the accessibility assessment.
- 4.19 The city parks contribute a combined 754 hectares of green space supply, but are largely the result of several large historic donations to the city. There are no plans that additional city parks would be created from new development sites. Nor is it anticipated that additional city parks would be created where existing gaps in provision exist. City parks serve the city as a whole, and attract visitors from beyond the city boundaries. The existing level of provision of city parks, as shown in table 4.1 is 1 hectare per 1,000 population. This level of city park provision will gradually decrease over time as the city population grows, whereas the above standard for Parks and Gardens should increase the total quantity in parallel with population growth to ensure that provision remains at 1 hectare per 1,000 population.

Current Provision - Quality

- 4.20 The Green Flag Award is a national standard for parks and green space. The last round of awards were presented in August 2010. In Leeds, Pudsey Park, Lotherton Hall, Temple Newsam, Golden Acre Park, Roundhay Park, Otley Chevin Forest Park and Kirkstall Abbey currently hold this status.
- 4.21 The quality of existing parks and gardens in the city was assessed through site visits against a reduced and localised variation of the national Green Flag standard. Although it should be noted that the full range of criteria were used for the 150 sites assessed through the Leeds Quality Parks Initiative. Each site was assessed against various relevant criteria. A copy of the site assessment form is available at Appendix C. The assessment can be presented as either a score out of 10 or a percentage. The results are

summarised in Table 4.3 below. It is important to note that site assessments reflect the quality of the site on the day they were visited.

Table 4.3 Quality of Parks and Gardens by Analysis Area

| Analysis Area | Average Quality Score | Range of Scores | Lowest Quality Site | Highest Quality Site | Number of sites |
|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| East Inner | 5.26 | 3.61 - 6.69 | The Rein, Seacroft | Ebors Playing Fields | 8 |
| East Outer | 5.68 | 3.84 – 7.06 | Whinmoor Park | Manston Park | 15 |
| North East Inner | 5.72 | 4.16 – 6.86 | Miles Hill | Hollin Drive, Meanwood | 7 |
| North East Outer | 5.92 | 3.69 – 8.46 | Hatfield Lane Recreation Ground | Adj Clifford Village Hall | 14 |
| North West Inner | 4.96 | 3.53 - 7.69 | Woodhouse Moor, Park | North West Road, Little London | 18 |
| North West Outer | 5.54 | 3.26 - 7.33 | Holt Park | Micklefield Park, Rawdon | 23 |
| South Inner | 5.17 | 3.4 – 7.23 | Hunslet Lake | Winrose Crescent, Belle Isle | 20 |
| South Outer | 5.82 | 2.92 - 8.76 | Adwalton Moor | Springfield Hill Park, Churwell | 31 |
| West Inner | 4.72 | 2.5- 6.53 | Ley Lane Recreation Ground, Armley | Ganners Lane, Bramley | 14 |
| West Outer | 5.95 | 3.53 – 7.81 | Roker Recreation Ground, Pudsey | Adjacent to Southroyd Primary School | 19 |
| Leeds | 5.50 | 2.5 - 8.76 | Ley Lane Recreation Ground, Armley | Springfield Hill Park, Churwell | 169 |

4.22 The results demonstrate the range of quality across the city's park and garden sites. On average, the highest scoring sites are located in the North East Outer and the lowest in the West Inner area. The following table 4.4 breaks down the quality scores by the parks and gardens sub type.

Table 4.4 – Quality of Parks and Gardens by Typology Sub Type

| Sub Type | Average Score | Range | Lowest | Highest |
|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| City Parks | 6.79 | 4.20 – 7.73 | Middleton Park | Lotherton Hall Estate |
| Local Recreation Areas | 5.42 | 2.5 – 8.61 | Ley Lane Recreation Ground | Moor Knoll Recreation Ground, East Ardsley |
| Neighbourhood Parks | 5.7 | 3.26 – 8.76 | Holt Park | Springfield Mill Park |
| Leeds | 5.55 | 2.5 – 8.76 | Ley Lane Recreation Ground | Springfield Mill Park |

4.23 The audit results reflect that average quality is higher for the larger city parks, over the more local recreation grounds. It is important to note that this is not a reflection of the wider range of facilities offered by those parks. Spaces were assessed against factors relevant to that space being assessed. For example, it would be unreasonable, to expect a small local park to have all the facilities of a city park. Small sites, providing all the facilities that they could be expected to offer, would receive a similarly good score even if it did not offer the wide range of facilities of a city park. The scores are more likely a result of the daily staff presence at the city parks.

- 4.24 The key issues emerging from the consultations and data relating to the quality of provision of parks across the city include:
- 54% of the on-street survey and 72% of the household survey respondents rating parks and gardens as good/very good;
 - 32% of the on-street survey and 19% household survey respondents rating parks and gardens as average;
 - Only a small minority of respondents (10% of the on-street survey respondents and 7% of the household survey respondents) rated parks and gardens as very poor/poor;
 - Survey respondents were consistently positive across the city with the exception of inner East and inner South; with 13% and 24% of the households surveyed considering the current provision to be poor/very poor;
 - The main issues stated by respondents related to dog fouling, vandalism/graffiti, litter problems and misuse or abuse of the site
 - Respondents noted that the features in providing good quality parks were, clean and litter free, flowers and trees, well kept grass, toilet provision and footpaths
 - The audit data revealed the current average quality score for parks and gardens is 5.49 out of 10 or 55%

Setting a Quality Standard

4.25 The Green Flag award is assessed in two key ways, firstly by reviewing a site management plan, and secondly a field assessment based primarily on observation during a site visit. Each category is given a score out of 10, with

a maximum of 30 points for the desk assessment and 70 points for the field assessment. To achieve the standard a minimum of 15 on the desk assessment and 42 on the field assessment is needed, however, an award can only be given if the overall score is greater than 65.

- 4.26 The council's Parks and Countryside Service operate a rolling programme of assessing 150 of the city's most popular parks and green spaces against an amended Green Flag standard. This exercise is known as Leeds Quality Parks (LQP) and assesses 50 sites every year, or 150 sites over 3 years.
- 4.27 In assessing site for LQP the Green Flag desk assessment is not carried out as most sites do not have a management plan. Thus, only the field based assessment is conducted, and as explained above, the score required to reach the standard is in effect 48. On average, each category must therefore achieve 7 out of 10 to reach the standard, although there is no minimum score for each category.
- 4.28 In 2007/08, 17% of the sites assessed under LQP passed the adopted standard.
- 4.29 As the PPG17 audit considered on-site quality using a field based assessment, the proposal is that the Green Flag quality standard, for the field assessment, is extended to all the green space that can be considered as Parks and Gardens. To account for the absence of the desk assessment and retain the disproportionate Green Flag emphasis on an overall pass mark, it is proposed to set the quality standard at 7 out of 10, or 70%. This is consistent with the council's existing LQP standard.
- 4.30 As the audit criteria were assessed on a range of 0 to 10, then the standard to achieve is an average of 7 (ie. 70% of 10) for all applicable criteria.

Existing Quality average is 5.55

Proposed Quality Standard is 7 out of 10 (70%)

Current Provision - Accessibility

- 4.31 The accessibility of sites is key to making the site widely available to the maximum number of potential park users. The recommended local standard is set in the form of a distance threshold and is derived from the findings of local consultations.
- 4.32 Site specific accessibility issues were also analysed as part of the site visits, where information and signage and general access issues were assessed.
- 4.33 Consultation and analysis has shown that the key accessibility issues are:
- Results of the Green Stat 2009 resident survey indicate that 74% of users travel to community parks on foot and 23% by car;
 - in the Needs Assessment, walking is identified as the mode of travel whereby most respondents 'expect' to reach parks and gardens. 69%

of the household survey and 81% in the on-street survey expect to walk to parks;

- driving is identified as the second most popular expected mode of travel whereby respondents 'expect' to reach parks and gardens, 26% of the household survey and 13% in the on-street survey expect to drive to parks;
- results of the Green Stat survey 2009 reveal that 88% of respondents travel less than 15 minutes to access a community park;
- the 75 percentile of respondents to the Needs Assessment indicate a 10 minute expected walk time to access parks and gardens;
- the 75 percentile of respondents who favoured to travel to parks & gardens by car indicated a preferred journey time of 15 minutes;
- findings of site assessments reveal that while on the whole parks are easily accessible, scores are polarised, ranging from 0% to 100% indicating that improvements are required. The average score attained for the access scoring criteria was 6. While many sites were perceived to be easily accessible with numerous entrances and well signed, others were considered to be poorly signed.

Setting an Accessibility Standard

4.34 The recommended local accessibility standard for parks and gardens is summarised below. The standard reflects local aspirations, with regard to 'expected' travel mode, as well as the focus on improving the physical access to parks and gardens across the city.

Recommended Accessibility Standard

15 minute walk time

4.35 There is a clear expectation from respondents that they would prefer to walk to parks and gardens. Therefore, a walk time standard is recommended. The standard has been set at a 15 minute (720 metres) walk time to local Parks and Gardens. Whilst the third quartile (ie. 75% of respondents) identified a preferred walk time of 10 minutes. The average response time is 11 minutes. The access to this typology also has to consider, access to amenity space at the lower level of the green space hierarchy. Respondents to amenity space also identified a 10 minute expected access time (see chapter 5). Setting the standard at 15 minutes provides a more realistic target and ensures a strategic distribution of the larger spaces with a greater range of facilities. This will enable a focus on the delivery of higher quality facilities, rather than a proliferation 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 healthy lifestyles. The standard recommended should be considered a minimum standard.

Applying the standards

- 4.36 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. Whilst it is important to consider the application of each standard in isolation, in reality they should be considered in the context of each other.
- 4.37 The application of the local quantity standard for each area is set out in Table 4.5. This assumes that only the population will increase, but the Parks and Gardens provision remains constant. The table illustrates the application of the standard against the current provision, and the likely implications of each of the three projected growth scenarios. The minus figures show the shortfall in hectares between what the forecast population would require when applying a standard of 1 hectares per 1,000 population. For example, the East Inner area is currently some 31 hectares in deficiency. This deficiency increases to 43, 52 or 48 hectares depending on the growth scenario.

Table 4.5 Application of Quantity Standard based on Existing Parks and Gardens provision (excluding city parks) to Show Deficits and Surplus by Analysis Area

| Analysis Area | Current balanced against local standard (1 hectares per 1000 population) | Future balanced against local standard - Scenario A (1 hectares per 1000 population) | Future balanced against local standard - Scenario B (1 hectares per 1000 population) | Future balanced against local standard – Scenario C (1 hectares per 1000 population) |
|------------------|--|--|--|--|
| East Inner | -30.57 | -43.64 | -52.11 | -48.12 |
| East Outer | -15.76 | -44.10 | -55.28 | -34.36 |
| North East Inner | -14.17 | -15.79 | -18.61 | -29.61 |
| North East Outer | -36.08 | -38.35 | -41.11 | -49.65 |
| North West Inner | -16.55 | -19.82 | -28.18 | -39.66 |
| North West Outer | 31.51 | 23.87 | 17.53 | 12.49 |
| South Inner | 15.02 | -4.65 | -28.96 | -1.25 |
| South Outer | 17.78 | 11.79 | 0.60 | -1.95 |
| West Inner | 44.08 | 42.43 | 39.20 | 33.13 |
| West Outer | 8.72 | 5.02 | 1.16 | -6.76 |
| Leeds | 3.97 | -83.26 | -165.77 | -165.75 |

4.38 As can be seen in Table 4.5:

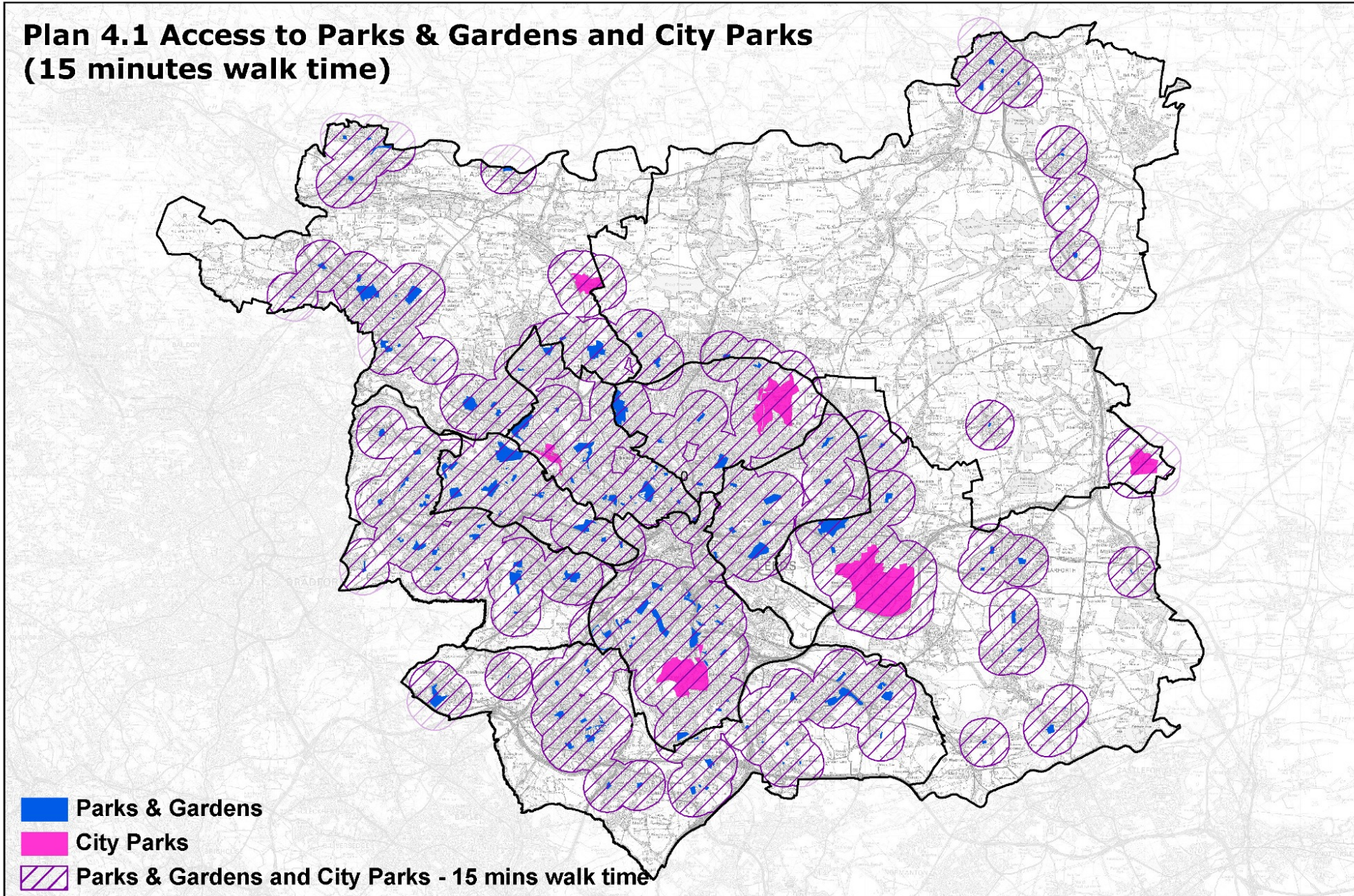
- Overall there is adequate provision of parks and gardens to meet current demand. In the event of any of the three population growth scenarios, the existing provision will become insufficient;
- if the population is to increase as projected in scenarios A and B, the application of the quantity standard indicates that there will be a shortfall of 83.26 hectares by 2026 using scenario A, or 165.77 hectares using scenario B;
- based on the application of the quantity standard, the East Outer, North East Inner and South Inner have sufficient provision to meet current and future demand, however, this is primarily a reflection of the location of the larger city parks;
- the greatest expected future shortfall is found within the North East Outer area, where a shortfall of 83 hectares is anticipated by 2026 (Scenario A);
- in light of the wide catchment of parks and gardens, quantitative deficiencies are of limited significance unless the deficiency is sufficiently large to justify the development of a new park; which appears justified under the majority of the areas and scenarios put forward;
- the application of the local accessibility standards for parks and gardens is set out overleaf in Plan 4.1. Consideration is given to the interrelationship between parks and amenity green spaces in Plan 4.2.

4.39 Analysis using GIS reveals that 86% of households in Leeds currently have access to a Park and Garden within a 15 minute walk of their home. The average distance travelled by a Leeds household, to the nearest Park or Garden site is 426 meters as a straight line distance. Assuming a 40% allowance for having to follow the road layout, this calculates to a probable walk distance of 596 metres.

4.40 Plan 4.1 applies the 15 minute walk time catchment to parks and garden sites and city parks. The plan illustrates that the vast majority of populated areas of the city have excellent access to this type of provision. The most obvious gaps in provision are large industrial areas or unpopulated rural locations.

4.41 In order to maximise the benefit of new parks, any new facilities should be targeted in locations that are currently lacking in provision where 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 in certain areas additional provision will be required over the LDF period. It is, therefore, imperative to plan for new green space in parallel with future housing growth in the Core Strategy and future site allocations development plan document.

Plan 4.1 Access to Parks & Gardens and City Parks (15 minutes walk time)

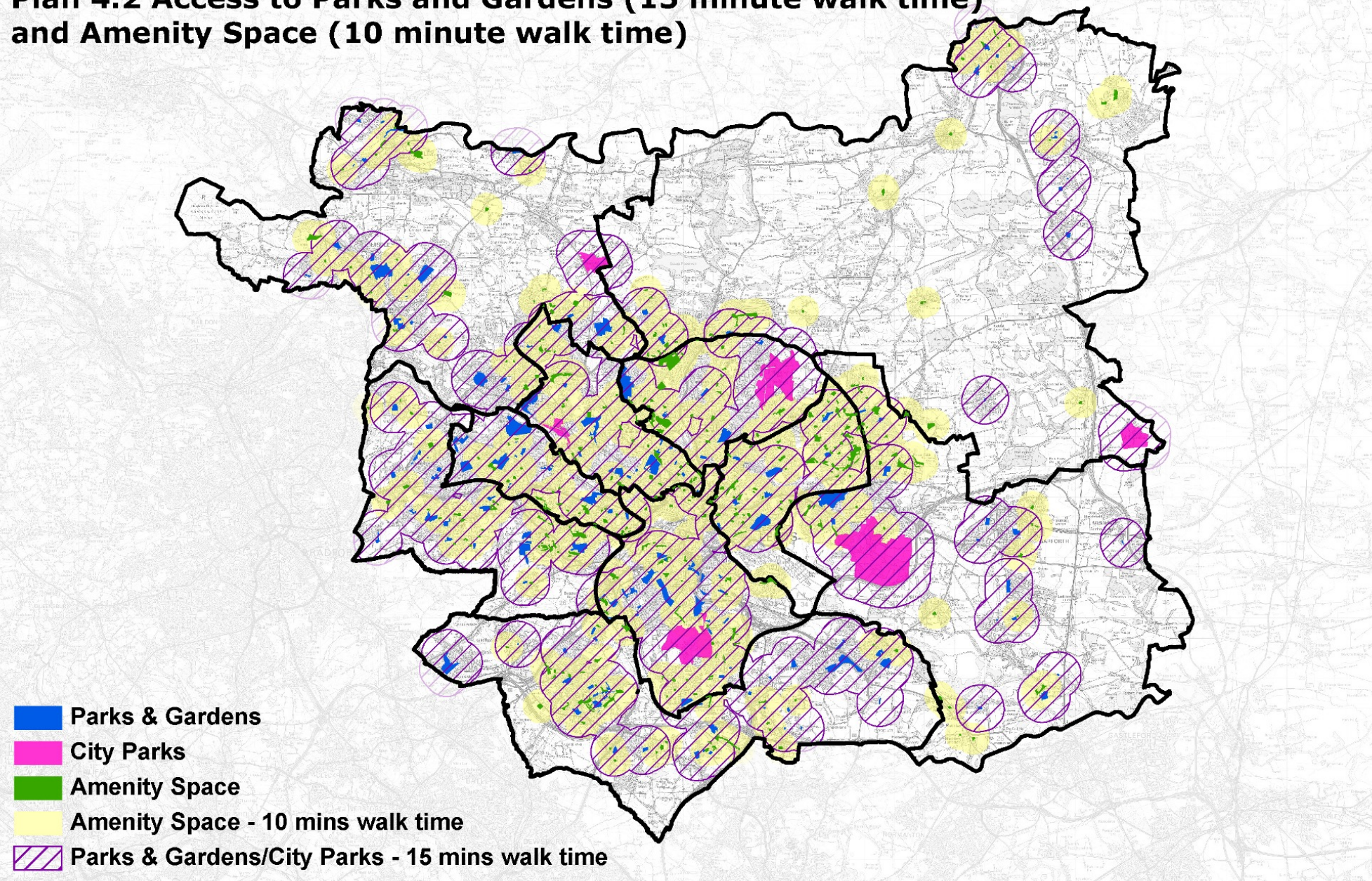


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- 4.42 For the purposes of this assessment, all Parks and Garden sites have a 15 minute walk time catchment. However, some sites (City Parks) draw residents from outside the Leeds authority boundary. It is important that all residents have access to a site within a 15 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 links between sites.
- 4.43 While the overall strategy should focus on improving the quality of key sites, if the overall aim of ensuring that all residents are within 15 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 key areas of deficiency, as the population grows.
- 4.44 As discussed later in chapter 5, where parks are provided within a 10 minute catchment (the recommended distance threshold for amenity green space as proposed in chapter 5) this may negate the need for further provision of amenity green space as a higher order facility, parks provide a greater range of formal facilities than amenity space.
- 4.45 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. Plan 4.1 can be used to illustrate the location of accessibility deficiencies ie. those areas falling outside the 15 minutes walk time catchments, and the availability and location of amenity green space. Further detailed assessment will be required to ascertain if specific amenity spaces in areas of identified deficiency are capable of appropriate enhancement to allow the transformation from amenity space to park.

Plan 4.2 Access to Parks and Gardens (15 minute walk time) and Amenity Space (10 minute walk time)



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- 4.46 Appendix D includes a series of ten plans which present each of the analysis areas at a detailed, larger scale. This permits more detailed examination of the gaps in provision and identifies which amenity green spaces could be considered for enhancement. Using these accessibility plans, it is possible to identify the following residential neighbourhoods and communities as locations where households do not have 15 minute walk time access to a park or garden:

Table 4.6 Communities in Accessibility Standard Deficit to Parks or Gardens by Analysis Area

| Analysis Area | Neighbourhood / Community in Accessibility Deficit |
|------------------------------------|---|
| East Inner (Appendix D.1) | Parts of Fearnville and Gipton to the south of Easterly Road |
| East Outer (Appendix D.2) | Swillington, East Kippax, Old Micklefield, parts of Great Preston and Allerton Bywater and the smaller villages of Ledston, Ledsham, Lower Mickeltown and Methley Junction. |
| North East Inner (Appendix D.3) | Carr Manor, Moortown |
| North East Outer (Appendix D.4) | Nothern Alwoodley, Slaid Hill, Shadwell, Scholes, Scarcroft and the smaller settlements of Thorer, Aberford, East Keswick, Harewood, Barsdsey, Collingham, Linton, Thorp Arch and Walton. |
| North West Inner (Appendix D.5) | A small area of Ireland Wood and central Headingley. |
| North West Outer (Appendix D.6) | Bramhope, North Horsforth around The Brownberries and the smaller settlement of Arthington |
| South Inner (Appendix D.7) | Leeds City Centre |
| South Outer (Appendix D.8) | Hill Top and Haigh Moor area of West Ardsley |
| West Inner (Appendix D.9) | The Poplars area of Armley |
| West Outer (Appendix D.10) | Gamble Hill, Wortley |

- 4.47 In considering the identification of specific amenity sites for transformational enhancement, it is essential that the following factors are considered:

- Level of accessibility deficit eg. 16 minutes (minor deficit just outside the accessibility standard) or 26 minutes (substantial deficiency). A minor deficit is unlikely to justify the level of investment required;
- number of affected households / residents;
- quantity of provision in the immediate area;
- potential of amenity spaces to undergo enhancement and transformation, some sites are steeply sloping or riparian zones and, therefore, incapable of appropriate enhancement;

- capacity of amenity spaces to accommodate formal park equipment, as not all communities and residents would consider this type of formal provision as an enhancement;
- historical function of the site as green space;

4.48 The majority of the areas identified at paragraph 4.46 for further assessment to tackle existing accessibility deficits are small settlements in rural locations. Whilst this study did not present a dual standard for urban and rural locations, the application of the parks standards in rural locations is an important consideration. In many areas there is insufficient population to justify the provision of a park. Historically, some Parish Councils have tackled this issue by providing formal park facilities on a number of small sites. Some sites being so small that the facility is the entire site, such as the play area adjacent to the river in Aberford.

4.49 In these locations, where there is no alternative amenity green space for enhancement, new residential development may represent the most realistic opportunity of creating park provision.

Summary

4.50 Parks and gardens are particularly valuable to local residents. Parks are one of the most frequently used open spaces in Leeds. They are used 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.

4.51 The wider benefits of parks are extensive. The role of parks and gardens in meeting targets to increase levels of physical activity and improve health should not be underestimated.

4.52 The quality of parks and gardens is of particular importance to local residents. Respondents highlighted that the functionality of sites, along with the maintenance and perception of safety is of particular importance.

4.53 There is currently sufficient provision of parks across the city. However, distribution is not equal. Application of quantity standards suggests that currently, overall, quantity of provision is sufficient to meet demand, although population growth will see demand increase and new provision will be required to meet this additional need.

4.54 Whilst the overall strategy should focus on improving the quality of key sites, if the overall aim of ensuring that all residents are within 15 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.

- 4.55 It is, therefore, recommended that the key priorities for the future delivery of provision of Parks and Gardens should be addressed through the Leeds Development Framework (LDF) and / or other delivery mechanisms, are:
- Ensure that the LDF contains policies that protect parks from development;
 - if the LDF proposes a strategy of accommodating significant levels of population growth, plan for provision of large new parks and gardens (as per the proposed standards) in association with urban extensions;
 - in allocating new development sites in locations which fail to meet the proposed standards, consider how the development can improve access and increase provision to parks;
 - prepare a strategic programme of qualitative improvements across the city;
 - maximise the role of parks to increase participation in health and physical activity across the city;
 - facilitate access to parks through the development of public transport links to parks and the creation of green linkages, from areas of lower provision.