

## **Chapter 5 - Amenity Green Space**

### **Introduction and definition**

- 5.1 Amenity green spaces are most commonly found in residential areas and function as informal recreation areas, green space in and around housing estates and village greens. Amenity green space is usually publicly accessible and serves the immediate local community providing a space for children's informal play, jogging and dog walking. Amenity space can also act as a buffer, reducing the noise from a busy road or providing shelter from prevailing winds. Amenity areas should always be highly accessible and, therefore, very close to where people live or work.
- 5.2 This assessment records amenity sites over 0.2 hectares. However, amenity sites under 0.2 hectares should also be recognised for providing an important function to the local community, often providing small spaces of greenery for visual amenity, improving biodiversity and informal play space.

### **Strategic Context**

#### **5.3 Leeds Unitary Development Plan (Review 2006)**

The Leeds Unitary Development Plan (UDP) provides the existing local planning policy framework for development across Leeds. The key policies relevant to amenity green space are:

- SP1 and 2, protect and enhance green space provision and the countryside;
- Policy N1 protects existing green space;
- Policy N2 sets out the green space hierarchy;
  - Local amenity Space 0.2 hectares per 50 dwellings
  - Local recreational areas 2.8 hectares within 400m
  - Neighbourhood/district park 12 hectares within 800m
  - Major City Parks support for additional provision where needed
- Policy N3 prioritises increasing the provision of green space in priority residential areas;
- 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.

### **Consultation – Assessing Local Need**

- 5.4 Consultation undertaken as part of the PPG17 study identified that most people are generally satisfied with the current quantity and quality of amenity areas. However, some comments suggest particular problems with amenity space, i.e. that there is not enough green space within housing estates, most of it is not suitable for play, areas suffer from graffiti and litter and that more places are needed for children to play. Points made as part of the needs assessment are as follows:

- The majority of people surveyed felt that the quality of amenity areas were either 'adequate' or 'good/very good';
- problems identified relating to the quality of the site were often regarding litter, graffiti or dog fouling;
- the provision of toilets and litter bins are felt to be important in providing good quality amenity space;
- the majority of people would expect to walk 10 minutes to an amenity space;
- stakeholders were concerned that much of the spaces are small, serve little or no function and often have evidence of vandalism, which, influenced their quality. They also identify the potential for amenity spaces to provide improved provision for children and young people;
- 29% of children and young people surveyed said that the amenity areas located close to their home was their favourite place to play.

### Current Provision Quantity

5.5 Current amenity green space provision within the Leeds district covers 355.83 hectares over 370 sites, ranging in size from 0.2 hectares to 10.93 hectares. The table below shows the provision and distribution of amenity green space, as a primary function, throughout the Leeds district.

**Table 5.1 Total Provision of Amenity Green Space in Leeds by Analysis Area**

Analysis Area	Population all ages 2008 mid year estimate	Number of Sites	Amenity Area Ha	Amenity Ha per 1,000 pop
East Inner	80,578	66	62.65	0.78
East Outer	85,392	38	35.72	0.42
North East Inner	70,909	25	51.57	0.73
North East Outer	62,281	36	27.73	0.45
North West Inner	106,127	35	30.58	0.29
North West Outer	87,305	32	30.84	0.35
South Inner	74,683	39	31.44	0.42
South Outer	90,587	40	38.15	0.42
West Inner	50,297	27	17.61	0.35
West Outer	71,097	32	29.54	0.42
<b>Leeds</b>	<b>779,256</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>355.83</b>	<b>0.46</b>

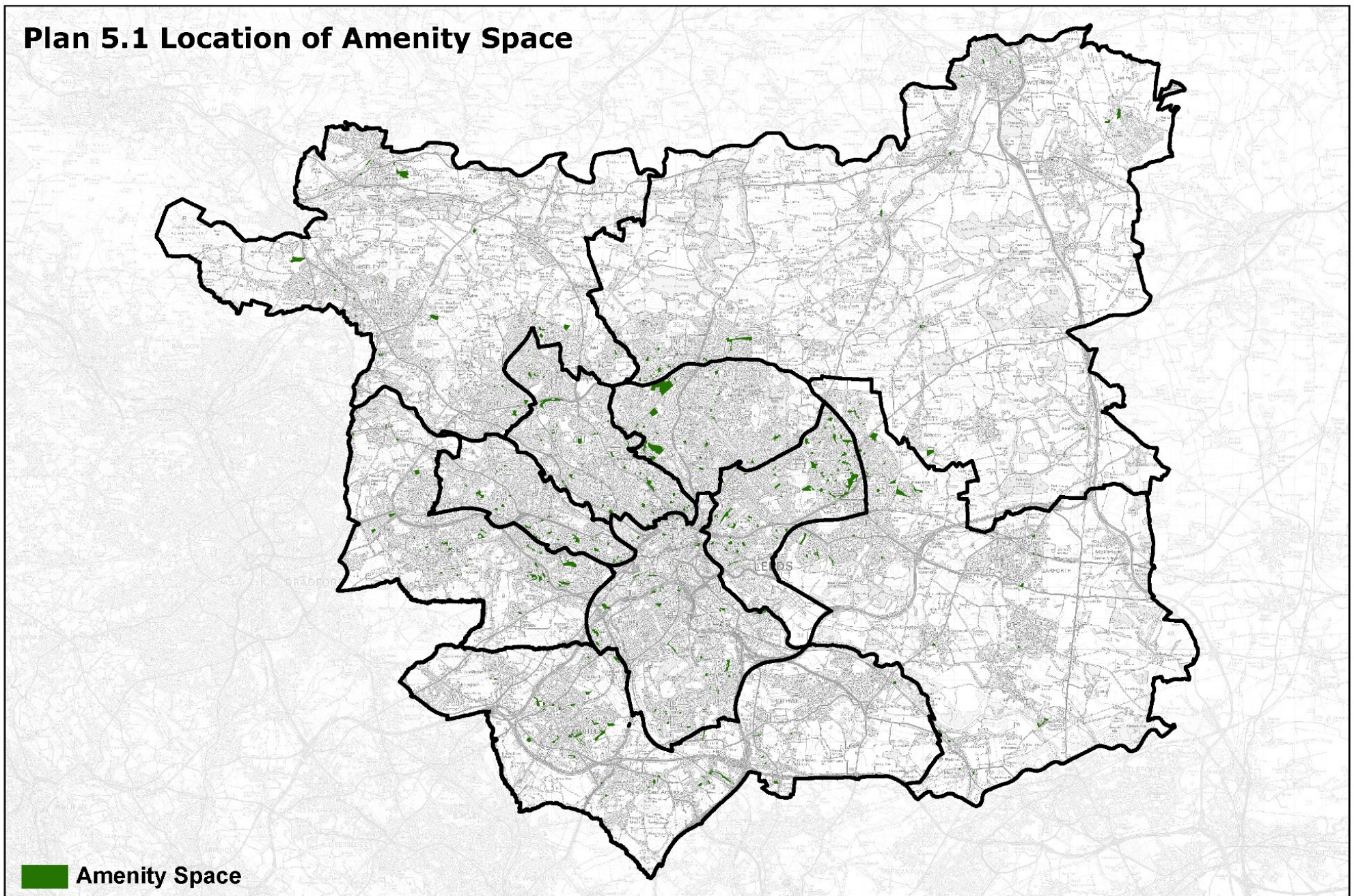
5.6 The East Inner area has the largest amount of amenity green space with 62.65 hectares and the most sites (66). The West Inner area has the lowest amount of amenity green space with 17.61 hectares and 27 sites. Over 30% of the amenity area is in the East Inner and North East Inner areas, resulting in the highest amount of amenity space per 1,000 population with 0.78

hectares and 0.73 hectares per 1,000 population respectively. These 2 areas are the only areas to be higher than the average.

- 5.7 As should be expected the majority (almost 90%) of amenity green space sites are small (2 hectares or below). The 38 sites above 2 hectares are relatively well distributed around the district and are between 2.02 hectares and 10.93 hectares. However these larger sites cover 42.6% of the total areas covered by amenity green space.
- 5.8 The majority (35% of households surveyed and 51% of on street surveys) of feedback from residents felt there was a 'about right' amount of amenity green space. However, a large proportion (about 40% of all respondents) felt that there was nearly enough or not enough amenity sites.



## Plan 5.1 Location of Amenity Space



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- 5.9 The map above demonstrates the distribution of all amenity sites within the Leeds area. A high concentration of amenity green spaces are located in the north and east main urban areas. Clear deficiencies can be identified in the north east and south east of the main urban area.
- 5.10 Existing green space provision is set out in Table 5.2 below. The table illustrates the current provision against each of the three projected growth scenarios.

**Table 5.2 Provision of Amenity Green Space per 1000 Population based on Three Population Growth Scenarios by Analysis Area.**

Analysis Area	Amenity Area Ha	Current provision per 1,000 population	Scenario A per 1,000 population (2026)	Scenario B per 1,000 population (2026)	Scenario C per 1,000 population (2026)
East Inner	62.65	0.78	0.67	0.61	0.64
East Outer	35.72	0.42	0.31	0.29	0.34
North East Inner	51.57	0.73	0.71	0.68	0.60
North East Outer	27.73	0.45	0.43	0.41	0.37
North West Inner	30.58	0.29	0.28	0.26	0.24
North West Outer	30.84	0.35	0.32	0.30	0.29
South Inner	31.44	0.42	0.33	0.26	0.35
South Outer	38.15	0.42	0.39	0.35	0.35
West Inner	17.61	0.35	0.34	0.32	0.29
West Outer	29.54	0.42	0.39	0.38	0.34
<b>Leeds</b>	<b>355.83</b>	<b>0.46</b>	<b>0.41</b>	<b>0.37</b>	<b>0.37</b>

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.

- 5.11 The table above demonstrates that future provision would reduce to reaching 0.37 hectares per 1,000 population if higher population growth occurs.

## **Setting the Standard - Quantity**

- 5.12 The current standard for amenity green space is 0.2 hectares per 50 dwellings as set out in Policy N2 of the Leeds UDP, or approximately 1.6 hectares per 1,000 population. Currently, city wide provision is 0.46 hectares per 1,000 population. This figure is almost two thirds lower than the standard in the in the UDP, however, the residents which responded to the needs assessment felt that current provision was about right.
- 5.13 The recommended local quality standard is 0.45 hectares of amenity green space per 1,000 population. This figure is rounded down from the existing city wide provision figure 0.46, recognising the disproportionate amount of amenity green space in the East Inner and the East Outer analysis areas.

## **Current provision Quality**

- 5.14 The table below looks at the quality of amenity green space in the Leeds district. The scores ranged from 0 (Kilburn Road, Wortley) to 9.5 (Jubilee Gardens, Wetherby). The poorer sites are often not maintained, not fit for use, have evidence of fly tipping, have issues regarding dog fouling and some sites are poorly managed and have allowed encroachment. The amenity space scoring higher scores are often well maintained and have a variety of planting in comparison to the poor sites.
- 5.15 The needs assessment identified conflicting views regarding the quality of amenity space. The majority of residents surveyed (over 60% ) felt that the quality was very good/good or average, whilst, stakeholders identified quality as a key issue for amenity sites raising concerns over the evidence of vandalism on site and existing poor layout.

**Table 5.3 Quality of Amenity Green Space by Analysis Area**

Analysis Area	Average Quality Score	Range of Scores	Lowest Quality Site	Highest Quality Site
East Inner	4.96	1-8.25	Neville Public Open Space	York Road Bridle Path
East Outer	5.12	1.18-7.81	Halton Moor Public House	Millennium Village Flood Area
North East Inner	5.38	1.63-7.38	Church Avenue Green space	Brackenwood Community Centre
North East Outer	4.71	1-9.5	Boundary Farm Road, Deanswood	Jubilee Gardens
North West Inner	5.34	2.5-8.45	Woodhouse Lane Green space	Woodsley Road (Leeds Uni)
North West Outer	5.91	2.37-7.84	High Royds Hospital 3	Union Court
South Inner	5.32	2.38-8.61	Queen Square	Merrion Gardens
South Outer	5.01	2.38-8.38	Granny Place	Carlton Green
West Inner	4.68	1-7.27	Cockshott Drive	St Marys Park Crescent
West Outer	4.19	0-7.69	Kilburn Road	Merrion Gardens
<b>Leeds</b>	<b>5.05</b>	<b>0-9.5</b>	<b>Kilburn Road</b>	<b>Jubilee Gardens</b>

5.16 As shown in the table 5.3 above, the district wide average was 5.05 and all areas scored below the 7 points which would be needed to establish a 'good' score. 13% (41 out of 371) of amenity green space sites scored a 7 or above.

### Setting the Standard – Quality

5.17 The 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. The 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 alluded to 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.

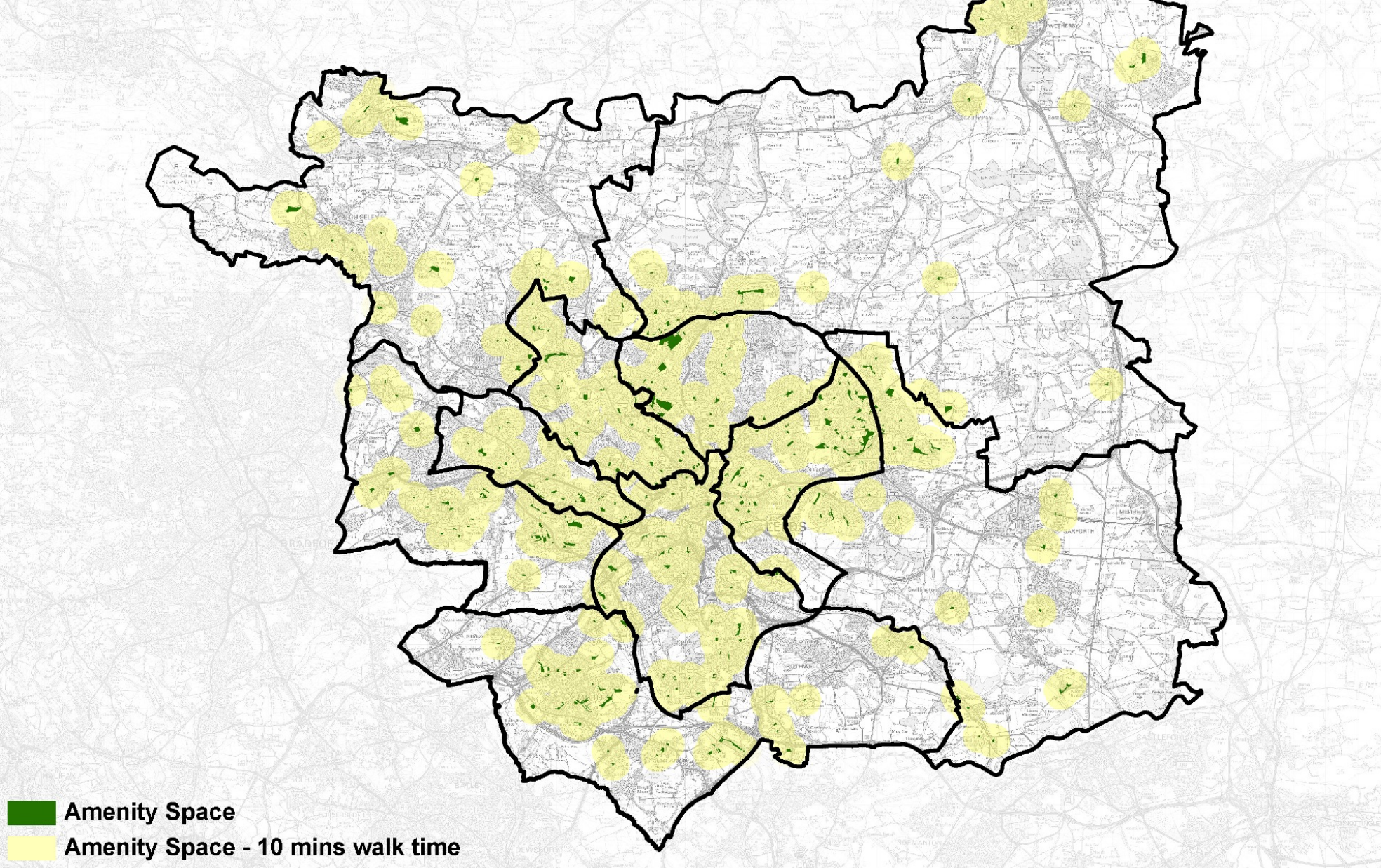
5.18 As the audit criteria were assessed on a range of 0 to 10, then the standard to achieve is an average of 7 (ie. 70% of 10) for all applicable criteria.

## **Current Provision Accessibility**

- 5.19 70% of the Leeds population are within a 10 minute walk time (480 meters) of an amenity green space. Leeds households are on average 414m away from a piece of amenity green space over 0.2 hectares.
- 5.20 The map below shows amenity sites with 480 meters buffer to demonstrate a 10 minute walk time. Over 70% of residents surveyed as part of the Needs Assessment expect to walk to an amenity space and the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile expect to walk for 10 minutes.
- 5.21 Access to amenity green space should also be viewed in conjunction with the parks and gardens typology as these higher level multi-function spaces can also perform the basic function of amenity space. This is shown in Plan 4.2 Access to Parks and Gardens and Amenity Space, in Chapter 4 Parks and Gardens.



# Plan 5.2 Access to Amenity Space (10 minute walk time)



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## Setting the Standards – Accessibility

- 5.22 The majority of respondents expect to walk 10 minutes to an amenity green space. 70% of the Leeds population live within 480 meters (equivalent to a 10 minute walk time) from their nearest amenity area.
- 5.23 The recommended local accessibility standard is an amenity site within 480 meters (10 minute walk time).

## Applying the standards of quantity, quality and accessibility

### Recommended Amenity Standards

**Quantity = 0.45 hectares per 1,000 population**

**Quality = Score a 7 out of 10 (70%)**

**Accessibility = 10 minute walk time**

- 5.24 The application of the recommended quantity, quality and accessibility standards are essential to understand the existing distribution of amenity green space and identify areas of deficiency and surplus. Whilst it is useful to consider the application of the standards for amenity space in isolation, in reality they should be considered in the context of other types of green space.
- 5.25 The application of the local quantity standard is set out in Table 5.4, illustrates the application of the standard against the current provision, and the likely implications of the three projected growth scenarios.

**Table 5.4 Application of Quantity Standard for Amenity Space to Show Deficits and Surplus by Analysis Areas**

<b>Analysis Areas</b>	<b>Current balanced against local standard (0.45 hectares per 1,000 population)</b>	<b>Future balanced against local standard - Scenario A</b>	<b>Future balanced against local standard - Scenario B</b>	<b>Future balanced against local standard – Scenario C</b>
East Inner	26.39	20.51	16.70	18.49
East Outer	-2.71	-15.46	-20.49	-11.08
North East Inner	19.66	18.93	17.66	12.71
North East Outer	-0.3	-1.32	-2.56	-6.40
North West Inner	-17.18	-18.65	-22.41	-27.58
North West Outer	-8.45	-11.88	-14.74	-17.00
South Inner	-2.17	-11.02	-21.96	-9.49
South Outer	-2.61	-5.31	-10.35	-11.49
West Inner	-5.02	-5.77	-7.22	-9.95
West Outer	-2.45	-4.12	-5.86	-9.42
<b>Leeds</b>	<b>5.16</b>	<b>-34.09</b>	<b>-71.22</b>	<b>-71.21</b>

5.26 Tables 5.4 reveals the following issues:

- Based on the application of the proposed quantity standards there is insufficient provision of amenity space in Leeds to meet current and future demand;
- the two areas in surplus at present (East Inner and North East Inner) continue to be in surplus for any of the population growth scenarios;
- North West inner has the highest deficit (17.2 hectares) which is expected to increase by between 1.5 and 10 hectares depending on the growth scenario.

## Summary

5.27 Amenity green spaces are used by a large proportion of the population especially children, a third of whom recognise it as their favourite places to play. The North West Inner and Outer areas show the greatest deficit of amenity green space at present in the Leeds area. The only areas of surplus are the East Inner and the North East Inner analysis areas, any sites felt to be surplus within these areas will need further assessment to investigate the potential of these sites for other green space typologies or for any development potential.

5.28 Amenity green space produced a wide range of scores from the site quality assessment with 13% of all amenity sites assessed as at least 7 out of 10 and

although the top score was 9.5, improvements need to be made of varying degrees to the sites that did not score 7 and those that did need to be maintained to a good standard.