# Plymouth's Green Space Strategy

## 2008 – 2023

## Background Report

Plymouth City Council
Parks Services
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# Plymouth's Green Space Strategy 2008 – 2023 Background Report

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# Plymouth's Green Space Strategy 2008 to 2023 – Background Report

## 1. Introduction

This report provides background information to accompany the Green Space Strategy. It sets out the links between the Strategy and other strategies and policies at local, regional and national level. It describes how data for the Strategy has been collected and analysed. It also examines what the data says about the current state of green space in Plymouth, which has informed the development of the vision, objectives and actions in the main Strategy.

The data and methods used to develop the Green Space Strategy follow government guidance as set out in PPG17 and the PPG17 Companion Guide. It has also been informed by CABE Space best practice. The current provision of accessible green space in Plymouth has been analysed in terms of –

- the quantity of green space
- the types of green space (functions)
- the quality of green space
- the distribution of green space - whether there are parts of the City that are lacking in green space
- the distribution of play space.

# 2. Links to other Strategies and Policies

## 2.1. National Level

### 2.1.1. PPG17: Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2002)

This policy document highlights the importance of green spaces in contributing to the government's objectives of:

- Supporting an urban renaissance
- Promoting social inclusion and community cohesion
- Promoting health and well being
- Promoting more sustainable development.

It requires local authorities to undertake robust assessments of the differing and distinctive needs of their communities for open space, sports and recreation facilities. It also requires them to set local standards for open space provision, including standards for access to open spaces based on an audit of existing open space and the needs of the local population. The audit should include an assessment of quality, so that proposals for enhancing the quality of green space can be made through better design, management and maintenance.

This Green Space Strategy has been prepared to fulfil the requirements of PPG17 in relation to green space; to provide a robust evidence base on green space quantity and quality and a Strategy for protecting and improving Plymouth's green spaces and people's enjoyment of them.

### 2.1.2. Green Spaces, Better Places (DETR, 2002)

This document recommends that urban green spaces need to be given a higher priority in national and local government policy, and be better integrated with other strategies for neighbourhood renewal, regeneration, housing, community, health and sport. It further recommends that better information be collected about the quantity and quality of green spaces.

*'Parks and green spaces are a popular and precious resource, which can make a valuable contribution to the attractiveness of a neighbourhood, to the health and wellbeing of local people and expand the educational opportunities for children and adults alike' (Para. 251).*

### 2.1.3. Living Places – Cleaner, Safer, Greener (ODPM, 2002)

This identifies the need to improve the quality of urban parks and green spaces and highlights the importance of green space strategies in developing a strategic approach to improving urban green space.

### 2.1.4. The National Charter for Children's Play

The National Charter for Children's Play (2007) prepared by Play England includes the principles that all children and young people have the right to play and need to play; that play provision should actively include the widest range of children; and that children have the same right to use and enjoy public space, including green spaces, as others.

## 2.2. Regional Level

### 2.2.1. South West Regional Spatial Strategy (2006 – 2026)

This Strategy puts forward a policy for Green Infrastructure (Policy G1I). Green Infrastructure includes green spaces and green links such as river corridors and wildlife corridors/greenways that can connect green spaces and provide havens for wildlife as well as opportunities for walking and cycling. The policy requires local planning authorities to identify broad locations for Green Infrastructure in their spatial strategy in relation to proposed development, co-ordinated across administrative boundaries as appropriate.

## 2.3. Local Level

### 2.3.1. Securing the Future for Generations Ahead: Plymouth's Sustainable Community Strategy 2007 - 2020

Plymouth's Community Strategy sets out the following vision –

*'By 2020, Plymouth will be recognised as one of Europe's finest, most vibrant waterfront cities, where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone'*

Green space is identified as one of the key ways in which this vision will be realised –

'Plymouth's network of parks, natural green spaces and water bodies will provide a vital visual, educational and cultural resource and will benefit the health and well-being of our citizens, as well as providing a sustainable environment for our wildlife'.

The Green Space Strategy can contribute to the following strategic objectives within the Community Strategy:

- Improving health and well-being – by providing more opportunities for people to access and enjoy green spaces.
- Developing a prosperous economy – well maintained green spaces improve the City's attractiveness to investors.
- Promoting community safety – green spaces that are well planned and maintained will provide safer environments for people to enjoy.
- Raising educational achievement – green spaces provide 'outdoor classrooms' for learning about nature.
- Promoting inclusive communities – by improving access to green spaces in neighbourhoods currently poorly served by green space.
- Developing an effective transport system – well connected and accessible green spaces encourage people to walk and cycle.
- Maintaining a clean and sustainable environment – green spaces play a vital role in improving air quality and protecting biodiversity.
- Stimulating culture and leisure activities – green spaces can be used as settings for community events.

The Green Space Strategy will also contribute to the Community Strategy's focus on three groups of people –

- Children and young people – by setting out a policy for improving green spaces and play areas to encourage outdoor play.
- Older people – by ensuring that everyone lives within an easy walk of an accessible green space.
- Those living in the most deprived communities – by developing actions to improve the quality and accessibility of green spaces in these neighbourhoods.

The Community Strategy identifies five 'priority neighbourhoods' that fall into the top 10% of deprived areas in England. These are the City Centre, Devonport, Stonehouse, North Prospect and Barne Barton. The Green Space Strategy can contribute to improving quality of life in these neighbourhoods by improving the quality of green space. The Community Strategy has a wider objective to reduce health inequalities across all neighbourhoods of the city. Improving green space will help towards achieving this objective.

### 2.3.2. Plymouth City Council's Corporate Plan 2008 – 2011

This plan identifies 14 Corporate Improvement Priorities (CIPs). One of these – CIP4 – aims to narrow the gap between communities, especially in terms of health, income, crime and education.

### 2.3.3. Plymouth's Local Development Framework

The City Council's Local Development Framework adopted **Core Strategy** (2006 – 2021) sets out a spatial vision for the development of the City. Based on the Greenscape Assessment data, it classifies every green space (both accessible and inaccessible) as either 'local' or 'strategic' for the City. Strategic green spaces are of importance to the City as a whole in terms of their character, biodiversity or heritage value, recreation or sports value. SO11 of the Core Strategy states that strategic green spaces are of importance in defining the City's character, supporting biodiversity, recreation and other benefits, while local green spaces are of importance to the creation of sustainable, linked communities. Policy CS18 (Plymouth's Green Space) states that the City Council will protect and support a diverse and multi-functional network of green space and waterscape.

Policy CS19 (Wildlife) states that the City Council will promote effective stewardship of the City's wildlife. This involves safeguarding national and international protected sites for nature conservation and maintaining a citywide network of local wildlife sites and wildlife corridors, links and stepping stones between areas of natural green space. This policy is supported by guidance in the draft **Design Supplementary Planning Document**. This contains maps showing international and local wildlife designations in the City.

The Core Strategy sets out plans for the City's growth over the period to 2021 and beyond. SO1 (Delivering Plymouth's Strategic Role) states the intention to enable Plymouth to fulfil its potential as the economic hub of the far South West but at the same time to safeguard natural resources and to deliver sustainable linked communities. The Key Strategy diagram identifies the major areas for growth over the plan period. These are the waterfront areas of Devonport, Millbay, City Centre, Sutton Harbour and East End; the northern corridor of Derriford/Seaton and the eastern corridor of North Plymstock. In total, up to 17,250 new dwellings could be built by 2021. In addition, a new settlement of 5,000 dwellings is proposed on the border with South Hams at Sherford. Alongside these proposals for urban growth are proposals to create two major strategic parks – one in the northern corridor and one in the eastern corridor.

The Green Space Strategy, together with the Greenscape Assessment (2000 and 2004 update) will inform the spatial vision and proposals by providing a

robust evidence base and action plan to guide planning and investment in green space. In addition, the Local Development Framework is an important mechanism for delivering the policies and priorities set out in the Green Space Strategy.

### 2.3.4. Plymouth's Playing Pitch Strategy 2007 - 2016

The Plymouth Playing Pitch Strategy (adopted December 2007) identifies the needs of Plymouth's community sports teams for access to appropriate (in terms of layout, size and quality) playing pitches for cricket, football, hockey, rugby union, American football, baseball and softball. It has been prepared in conformity with PPG17 and Sport England. It does not consider the needs of schools for playing pitches or the informal needs of the local community for kick-about areas.

It analyses the overall stock of playing pitches within Plymouth (both pitches available and unavailable for community use and disused pitches); their quality; their current usage by Plymouth sports teams and the predicted demand for pitches in 2016 based on expected population growth and trends in sports participation. The balance between supply and demand both now and by 2016 is assessed to identify current and predicted shortages in sports pitch provision. Based on this analysis, local standards of pitch provision are proposed so that pitch provision can grow in line with population growth. Different local standards are proposed for the south, north and east of the City based on analysis of provision and demand in each of these sub-areas.

### 2.3.5. Play in Plymouth: the Play Policy and Strategy for Plymouth 2007 – 2010

Plymouth's Play Policy and Strategy is committed to developing high quality play provision for children up to age 18 that is appropriate, local, stimulating and challenging for all children and young people. The objectives of the Plymouth Play Policy and Strategy reflect a commitment to children's play as fundamental to their development from birth to eighteen years. It values children's right to play. It recognises the crucial role adults have in ensuring children and young people have good quality play experience.

Consultation carried out for the Play Strategy identified that children and parents/carers would like to see more good quality local parks and play areas offering a wide range of activities for the whole family to access.

### 2.3.6. Plymouth's Second Local Transport Plan 2006 – 2011 (LTP2)

This sets out the transport strategy and implementation programme. It includes an objective to improve accessibility and social inclusion. A major focus of the strategy is on improving public transport.

# 3. Green Space Data and Methodology

## 3.1. Data Sources

### 3.1.1. The Greenscape Assessment

This Strategy builds on data that was collected for the Greenscape Assessment in 2000/ 2004. In this assessment 391 green spaces were surveyed and mapped on a GIS overlay. Together they represent over a third of Plymouth's area (not including private gardens, grass verges or other incidental green spaces). About half of Plymouth's greenscape area is accessible to the public for informal recreation.

Each site was assessed according to its importance in relation to eight functions:

1. Informal recreation
2. Sports and formal recreation
3. Habitats and species
4. Visual amenity
5. Separation/ buffer
6. Access corridors/ links
7. Historical/Cultural significance
8. Countryside/ food growing

Each site was assessed as to whether it was of neighbourhood, district, City-wide, regional, national or international importance for each function. The ownership of each green space was also recorded.

These sites were identified on the proposals map for the Plymouth Local Plan Review First Deposit (2001), and their functions were listed in an Appendix to this plan. Each site was given a reference number for identification.

This Green Space Strategy has taken the Greenscape data and boundaries as a starting point and has focused on the greenscape areas with an informal recreation function – i.e. those that are publicly accessible for recreation.

Changes have been made to some of the original greenscape boundaries –

- Sub-division of some spaces
- Adjustment of some boundaries
- Merging of some spaces

- Addition of four new green spaces that were not included in the Greenscape Assessment.

Each change has been made to update the use and function of the particular green space. Where a green space boundary has changed, a new reference number has been given. Each green space with informal recreation use has also been named to emphasise its unique identity and to make the data set more user-friendly.

#### 3.1.2. Plymouth Playing Pitch Strategy 2007 - 2016

Data on the function, ownership, use and quality of playing pitches in Plymouth was collected for the Playing Pitch Strategy. This data has informed the development of the Green Space Strategy in relation to playing pitches.

#### 3.1.3. Allotments and Play Areas

Data on allotments and play areas owned and/or managed by the City Council has been mapped on a GIS overlay.

## 3.2. The Green Space Audit

The green space audit was designed to identify and record the functions of each accessible green space and to assess its quality. Altogether, 225 green spaces were surveyed between December 2006 and October 2007, covering an area of 1,637 hectares or 55% of Plymouth's total green space.

The audit provides a wealth of information on each publicly accessible green space in Plymouth relating to –

- The character/type of each green space (primary and secondary functions)
- The quality of each green space
- The size of the population that each green space serves.

The data has been recorded on a database and GIS overlay.

#### 3.2.1. Green Space Functions

*Primary Function*

All publicly accessible green spaces in Plymouth have been classified according to their primary function. This refers to the main function or character of the green space. The primary functions identified for the purpose of this Strategy are based on the typology recommended in PPG17 and are as follows –

Table 1 – Green Space Primary Functions

| Primary function | Description |
|---|---|
| Parks and gardens | Urban parks, country parks and formal gardens that have been landscaped and offer a range of amenities for recreation. |
| Informal green space | Informal recreation spaces that are predominantly mown grass and require little maintenance. Some may include amenities such as a children's play area or playing pitch. |
| Cemeteries (churchyards have not been included in this Strategy). | Places to respect and commemorate the dead. Cemeteries are also places for exercise, relaxation and for nature and local history. |
| Natural green space | Includes woodland, natural grassland, wetlands, open and running water and cliffs/shoreline. |
| Local Nature Reserves | Accessible green spaces (natural\semi-natural green spaces) managed for people and wildlife. They are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally. |

Classifying each green space according to its primary function enables an assessment to be made of the amount and distribution of different types of green space.

*Secondary Functions*

Many green spaces perform more than one function. For example, an informal green space may contain an area of woodland, a play area or allotments. Functions additional to a site's primary function are known as secondary functions. Secondary functions enhance the interest and value of a green space. In general, the larger the green space the greater the number of secondary functions it will have.

Secondary functions can include all of the primary functions listed above. In addition, the following functions have been counted as secondary functions –

Table 2 – Green Space Secondary Functions

| Secondary function | Description |
|---|---|
| Formal Play areas | Includes equipped children's play grounds, Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs), youth shelters and skate parks. |
| Allotments | Usually public land rented in plots to local people who cultivate fruit or vegetables for their own consumption. |
| Playing pitches[1]. | Includes grass sports pitches (and artificial surfaces) for football, rugby and cricket. |

[1] The findings in this Strategy are taken from the City's Playing Pitch Strategy.

While playing pitches may be informal recreation spaces when not in use for sport, they are not designed for informal recreation and should not be counted as such. Formal play areas, allotments and playing pitches all serve a special recreational purpose and are located both within accessible green spaces and outside them (for example, many playing pitches are located on school playing fields or at private sports clubs while many play areas are located outside green spaces). Special considerations apply to each of them.

Although allotments can be considered as a primary function, the majority of allotments in Plymouth border, or are located within, larger green spaces. Therefore allotments have been included as a secondary function. While allotment sites are not publicly accessible (key holders only), it is still important for them to be considered. Allotments offer opportunities to tackle the issues of sustainable development, community development, bio-diversity, healthy living and education objectives in a combined way. Promotion of allotments can play a role in increasing environmental awareness and can provide an educational resource for all ages. Many allotment sites have massive nature conservation value and add to the network of wildlife corridors throughout the City. A separate Allotment Strategy will be commissioned in order to address the complex issues and needs surrounding allotment sites in Plymouth.

### 3.2.2. Green Space Hierarchy

A hierarchy of provision is a way of identifying the different roles that green spaces perform in terms of the populations that they serve. The hierarchy is different to function, although some primary functions will tend to fill a higher level of the hierarchy than others.

All of Plymouth's accessible green spaces have been classified as being of 'local' or 'city' importance based on their size and the number and importance of the functions they perform.

*'City' Green Spaces*

'City' green spaces are generally large in size and/or have a wide range of attractions, and will often be located more than a 5-minute walk from where users live. City green spaces include Plymouth's premier green spaces. Some, such as the Hoe, are internationally famous destinations. Others, such as the Plym Valley, attract visitors from Plymouth and surrounding areas, while others, such as Devonport Park, may attract visitors from surrounding neighbourhoods. All of the City's Local Nature Reserves have been designated as 'city' green spaces to reflect their importance for providing access to biodiversity.

*'Local' Green Spaces*

Green spaces that mainly serve the local population have been classified as 'local' green spaces (most users will walk less than five minutes to reach them). They are generally small in size and are likely to offer fewer attractions and amenities. 'City' Green Spaces will also serve as 'local' green spaces to their immediate population.

In general, 'local' green spaces are less than two hectares in size. Two hectares has been used as a threshold in other green space strategies (e.g. South Tyneside). The Plymouth Adopted Local Plan (1996) used two hectares as a threshold to distinguish between Local Parks and District Parks, while English Nature concluded that sites of less than two hectares are unlikely to be of value for biodiversity but can be of value for local amenity and especially for children's play (Accessible Natural Greenspace in Towns and Cities, 1995).

Identification of a green space hierarchy enables patterns of provision to be identified and informs planning for green space.

### 3.2.3. Assessing Green Space Quality

The quality audit was designed in accordance with CABE Space guidance. It assessed each green space against nine themes, within which there were 48 criteria (a copy of the survey sheet used is included at the end of this document). The nine themes are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 – Green Space Quality Themes

| | |
|---|---|
| Accessibility | How easy it is for users with reduced mobility to enjoy the green space and can the green space be safely accessed? |
| Design | Is the green space well designed and how well is it integrated into the neighbourhood? |
| Conservation and Heritage | Does the green space have biodiversity or heritage importance and are these properly managed? |
| Community Involvement | Is the green space used for community activities? |
| Sustainability | Is the green space being managed sustainably? |
| Welcoming | Are entrances attractive and welcoming and are there signs/ information? |
| Management and Maintenance | How well maintained is the green space? What condition is it in? |
| Safe and Secure | How well used is the park and how safe does it feel? |
| Marketing | Is there information or publicity about the green space – e.g. for education? |

Each criterion was scored from 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent) (where the criterion was not present on a particular green space then it was scored 0). The audit assessed each site's current quality and the site's potential quality. Assessment of potential quality was based on what a site could reasonably be expected to attain given sufficient funding and management, and given the function(s) that it performs.

The quality audit was designed to be applicable to all green space functions, and the assessment of existing and potential quality means that the performance of green spaces with different functions can be compared with each other. For each criteria, a site's potential will depend on its function(s). For example, a park would be expected to achieve high scores on criteria within the themes of 'accessibility' and 'design' but lower scores on 'conservation', whereas a Local Nature Reserve would be expected to score well on 'conservation' and 'sustainability' but less well on 'accessibility'.

The scores for each site were then entered onto an Excel spreadsheet for analysis. Each site's existing and potential quality scores were calculated for all the quality themes and criteria. Each site was given a percentage score based on how its existing quality compared to its potential quality. A high percentage means that it is close to realising its full potential.

Table 4 – Green Space Audit Score Bands

| Audit Score (%) | Band |
|---|---|
| 20 – 39.9 | Poor |
| 40 – 59.9 | Fair |
| 60 – 79.9 | Good |
| 80 – 99.9 | Excellent |

The green spaces were then grouped according to how their quality and potential were assessed, from 'poor' to 'excellent'. To attain an audit score of 'good', for example, a green space site must achieve between 60% and 79.9% of its potential averaged across the nine quality themes. This does not mean that a particular green space has achieved a 'good' score for every theme - it may have attained a higher score on some themes but a lower score on others.

Analysis of quality enables identification of priority areas for investment. It provides an objective view of where resources are needed most, regardless of size or function of green space. It enables the development of management and investment action plans for individual green space sites or alternatively across the key themes generally.

## 3.3. Accessibility of Green Spaces

The ability of people to access green spaces easily is very important to promote health and well-being. It is important that residents and workers are able to access green spaces within a reasonable distance of where they live or work to encourage visits on foot or by bicycle.

Accessibility can be expressed through distance thresholds, which represent the maximum distance that a typical user can reasonably be expected to travel. For this Green Space Strategy, the distance threshold represents walking time. It has been decided, based on findings from the public consultation, to set one distance threshold for the whole City of a 5 minute walk to the nearest accessible green space (whether 'local' or 'city', covering all primary functions), which translates to 400m walking distance or 240m straight line/as the crow flies. The use of a straight line distance to measure walking distances was advocated by the National Playing Fields Association (now Fields in Trust). A 400 m/five minute walk target was also included in the Plymouth Adopted Local Plan (1996). However, it is important to be aware that different groups will have different walking times – for example, carers with young children or older people will tend to have slower walking times, and walking times will increase where the topography is steep.

Using GIS, a 240 m accessibility radius has been mapped around the boundaries of all accessible green spaces in Plymouth to identify deficiency areas falling outside these radii. The accessibility radii have been adjusted to take into account 'severance factors' that pose barriers to access, such as major 'A' roads, the River Plym and the mainline railway. Deficiency area boundaries have also been adjusted to exclude areas where people do not live or work.

More detailed analysis of accessibility to green space has been carried out for the Sustainable Neighbourhood Assessments as part of the Local Development Framework, where actual 400m walking distances have been measured from the entrances to green spaces. This work can inform the development of policy for addressing green space deficiency.

## 3.4. Customer Research

It is impossible to identify local needs properly without involving local communities. Community consultations can help to identify local people's attitudes to existing provision and to identify how they would like to see green spaces improve.

A significant level of customer research has taken place to inform this Green Space Strategy. Over 300 people have contributed their views and ideas. A number of focus groups were held with members of the public. The focus groups were advertised through the Area Committees and through local community groups. A special workshop was held with the Disability Action Network. A meeting was also held with the Tenant Participation Group. Other members of the public contributed their views through an on-line questionnaire.

This research builds on public opinion data that has been collected for the Greenscape Assessment, Plymouth's yearly satisfaction survey for its services and APSE (Association of Public Service Excellence) reports.

## 3.5. Green Space Value

PPG17 recommends that each green space be assessed for its 'value' in terms of its importance to the local and wider community. Value is a broader concept than quality, encompassing many different considerations such as scarcity value, symbolic associations, biodiversity and historic associations. For example, a high quality site may be of low value to the community if it is located in an inaccessible location (for example, away from residential areas) or has other access restrictions. Conversely, a small green space of poor quality may be of high value to the community if it is the only green space

within the immediate neighbourhood, or if it has important historic associations.

While the value of any green space for biodiversity, heritage or local character can be objectively assessed (and has been in other documents such as the Greenscape Assessment), the social value of a green space for local residents can only be assessed by public consultation. It would therefore be inappropriate to assign a value to each green space in this Strategy. Any proposal for a change in the status of any green space will need to consider its value to the community as well as the standards and actions set out in the Green Space Strategy.

## 3.6. Analysis by Sub-Area

Analysis of green space by function, hierarchy and quality has also been carried out for three sub-areas of the City: north of the A38, south of the A38 and east of the River Plym. This enables a more detailed assessment of provision and needs in different parts of the City, and was an approach taken in the Playing Pitch Strategy. Please refer to Figure 11 for a diagram of Plymouth's sub areas.

## 3.7. Setting Local Standards

PPG17 requires local planning authorities to set local quality, quantity and distance/accessibility standards. These should be based on existing provision, analysis of local needs in light of community views and a judgement as to what is feasible to deliver.

### 3.7.1. Quality Standards

Quality standards have been derived from the quality audit of existing and potential quality, together with customer views as to what they would most like to see improved.

### 3.7.2. Quantity Standards

Quantity standards have been derived from an understanding of existing provision, expressed as a ratio of area to population (hectares per 1000 population). This indicates how much green space of different functions there is per person and enables green space provision in Plymouth to be compared with provision in other cities. The 2006 population data for Plymouth has been used for this calculation.

A judgement needs to be made as to whether existing provision is sufficient and should be used to set a standard for future provision, or whether it is too high or too low. In this Strategy, a standard has been set for each type of green space as well as an overall standard, although it is emphasised that all

green spaces are expected to be multifunctional in character. Local standards have also been set for allotments and for formal play. The playing pitch standards set out in this Strategy are taken from the Plymouth Playing Pitch Strategy.

### 3.7.3. Distance Standards

Distance standards should be set to reflect how far people say they are prepared to travel, and how far they currently travel. A decision has been made to set one standard for Plymouth's green space and one for formal play space, as too many different standards can cause confusion and complexity.

# 4. Quantity and Functions of Green Space

## 4.1. Primary Functions

Key features are –

- Plymouth has a wealth of natural green space – especially in the north of the City.
- Most of Plymouth's Local Nature Reserves are located in the north of the City, with none in the east.
- A concentration of parks and gardens in the south and east of the City, with only one park (Butt Park) in the north.
- A large number of informal green spaces, especially in the north of the City.
- All three of the City's cemeteries (Weston Mill, Ford Park and Efford) are located in the south of the City.

All publicly accessible green spaces in Plymouth have been classified according to their primary function. This enables an assessment to be made of the amount and distribution of different types of green space.

Figure 6 (Appendix 2) shows the distribution of green spaces in Plymouth by primary function. Plymouth's wooded river valleys stand out (many of which are natural green spaces or Local Nature Reserves) – particularly in the north of the City. The large parks of Central Park, Saltram and the Hoe also stand out. There are, however, many 'white' areas of the City which have no publicly accessible green spaces. One of the purposes of the Green Space Strategy is to address areas of green space deficiency where people currently do not have sufficient access to green space.

The total area of green space for each primary function has been analysed – both for the City as a whole and for three sub-areas of the City: the north, the south and the east. Table 5 shows the breakdown of accessible green space by primary function.

Table 5 – Accessible green space in Plymouth by primary function and sub-area

| Primary function | Sub area (hectares) | | | City (hectares) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | East | North | South | |
| Informal Green Space | 116.51 | 178.25 | 125.65 | 420.41 |
| Cemetery\Churchyard | 0 | 0 | 42.39 | 42.39 |
| Park\Garden | 162.28 | 4.62 | 170.94 | 337.84 |
| Local Nature Reserve | 0 | 134.67 | 38.99 | 173.66 |
| Natural Green Space | 137.54 | 289.16 | 73.17 | 499.87 |
| Total | 410.03 | 606.7 | 451.14 | 1467.87 |

## 4.2. Secondary Functions

Secondary functions are recognised as important in addition to a site's primary function, as they generally increase the quality and interest of a site. While many allotments, playing pitches and play areas are located on accessible green spaces, they should not count towards the total area of accessible green space for the purpose of setting local quantity standards.

The area of accessible green space covered by specialised secondary functions (playing pitches, play areas and allotments) has been estimated as shown in Table 6 –

Table 6 – Accessible Green Space in Plymouth by Secondary Function

| Estimated area of accessible green space covered by secondary uses | Hectares |
|---|---|
| Playing pitches[1] | 113.5 |
| Allotments[2] | 18.28 |
| Formal Play areas[3] | 6.32 |
| Total | 138.1 |

[1] Number of playing pitches located on accessible green space multiplied by the Sport England maximum recommended pitch sizes by type of sport. Pitch data is taken from the Playing Pitch Strategy.

[2] Allotments located on accessible green spaces.

[3] Number of equipped play areas owned by Plymouth City Council located on accessible green space multiplied by 800 $m^2$ (to allow for a mix of 'LEAPs' and 'NEAPs').

The total area of green space shown in Table 5 above, therefore, needs to be adjusted to exclude the area covered by these secondary functions. This adjustment has been made as follows –

Assuming that 60% of secondary functions are located on informal green space –

138.1 x 0.6 = 82.86 hectares.

Adjusted figure for area of informal green space = 420.41 – 82.86

= 337.55 hectares.

Assuming that 40% of secondary functions are located on parks/ gardens –

138.1 x 0.4 = 55.24 hectares.

Adjusted figure for area of parks and gardens = 337.84 – 55.24

= 282.6 hectares.

## 4.3. Analysis of Provision by Population

Table 7 shows the ratio of adjusted accessible green space to population (hectares per 1000 population) by primary function, based on 2006 population data (248,100).

Table 7 – Accessible Green Space in Plymouth by Primary Function per 1000 population

| Primary Function | Adjusted Area (hectares) | Total Population (2006) | Hectares per 1000 population (area divided by total population) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Informal Green Space | 337.55 | 248,100 | 1.36 |
| Parks and Gardens | 282.60 | 248,100 | 1.14 |
| Cemetery\Churchyard | 42.39 | 248,100 | n/a |
| Local Nature Reserve | 173.66 | 248,100 | 0.70 |
| Natural Green Space | 499.87 | 248,100 | 2.01 |
| Total | | | 5.21 |

Overall provision of accessible green space in Plymouth is estimated to be 5.21 hectares per 1000 population. The local green space standards contained in the Green Space Strategy are based on these ratios.

# 5. Green Space Hierarchy

Key features are –

- There are 38 'city' green spaces and 190 'local' green spaces.
- About two thirds of Plymouth's total accessible green space is 'city' green space.
- All of the Local Nature Reserves and cemeteries are classed as 'city' green spaces.
- Many of Plymouth's natural green spaces and parks and gardens are classified as 'city' green spaces.
- Only a small number of informal green spaces are classed as 'city' green spaces (including Brickfields and the coastal spaces of Jennycliff, Mount Batten and Devil's Point).
- The majority of informal green spaces are classed as 'local' green spaces.
- Many of the smaller natural green spaces are classed as 'local' green spaces.

All of Plymouth's accessible green spaces have been classified as being of 'local' or 'city' importance based on their size and the number and importance of the functions they perform. 'City' green spaces attract visitors from across the City because of their large size and/or their range of attractions. 'Local' green spaces, on the other hand, are visited primarily by local residents, are generally small in size and are likely to offer fewer attractions and amenities. This does not mean that they are any less valuable, however. In the public opinion survey, 60% of respondents said that the green space they visit most regularly is their local green space. Tables 8 and 9 show the total area of 'city' and 'local' green spaces for the City as a whole and for each sub-area, while Figure 7 (Appendix 2) shows the geographical distribution of 'city' and 'local' green space.

Table 8 – Accessible Green Space of 'city' Importance

| Function | Sub area (Hectares) | | | Plymouth (Hectares) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | East | North | South | |
| Informal Green Space | 22.79 | 0 | 18.81 | 41.60 |
| Cemetery\Churchyard | 0 | 0 | 42.39 | 42.39 |
| Parks and Gardens | 140.84 | 0 | 139.18 | 280.03 |
| Local Nature Reserve | 0 | 134.67 | 38.99 | 173.66 |
| Natural Green Space | 82.87 | 247.77 | 159.30 | 489.94 |
| Total | 246.50 | 382.43 | 398.67 | 1027.61 |

Table 9 – Accessible Green Space of 'local' Importance

| Function | Sub area (Hectares) | | | City (Hectares) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | East | North | South | |
| Informal Green Space | 93.72 | 178.25 | 106.84 | 378.81 |
| Park\Garden | 21.43 | 4.62 | 31.75 | 57.81 |
| Natural Green Space | 48.37 | 41.40 | 21.26 | 111.02 |
| Total | 163.52 | 224.27 | 159.86 | 547.64 |

# 6. Green Space Quality

Tables 10 and 11 show how green spaces of different functions perform on quality across the nine quality themes, while Figure 8 shows the distribution of green space quality within Plymouth.

Key features are -

- Overall, Plymouth's green spaces are generally of good or excellent quality. There are no poor green spaces but there are also no green spaces that currently reach their full potential.
- Over a third of all accessible green space has been rated as good while a third has been rated as excellent. This amounts to 1,128 hectares of green space that has achieved at least a good quality assessment.
- There are no obvious geographical patterns of quality within Plymouth - each sub area contains green spaces of a range of quality.
- Informal green spaces achieve the lowest average scores (although still averaging good), highlighting that many currently are not meeting their potential. Cemeteries have been rated as having the highest overall quality of all the green space types, followed by Local Nature Reserves and parks/gardens.
- 'Local' green spaces tend to average lower quality scores than 'city' green spaces, suggesting that they have received a lower priority in the past.
- The audit shows that Plymouth's green spaces are generally well designed and safe and secure, but they do not offer a welcoming environment and are poorly marketed. These are the themes that have been identified as needing most improvement, but improvements can be made for all the themes.

## 6.1. Analysis of Quality by Green Space Function

*Parks and Gardens*

Parks and gardens were rated as excellent on 'design', 'safe and secure' and 'community involvement' and good on the other factors except for 'welcoming'

and 'marketing' which were only rated as fair. Overall, the 'city' parks were rated as excellent while 'local' parks were rated as good.

*Informal Green Space*

Informal green spaces were rated as best on 'design' and 'safe and secure' and good on all the other themes except for 'welcoming' and 'marketing' which are only rated as fair. 'City' informal green spaces scored slightly better on average than 'local' informal spaces, with 'local' informal spaces having a wider range of scores from fair to excellent.

*Natural Green Space*

Natural green spaces were rated as excellent on 'design' and good on 'safe\secure', 'sustainability' and 'conservation\heritage'. They performed only fair on 'welcoming' and 'marketing'. 'City' natural green space sites scored from good to excellent overall, while some 'local' sites were only rated as fair overall.

*Local Nature Reserves*

Local Nature Reserves came out as having a high overall quality in the audit. They scored excellently on 'conservation and heritage' and almost excellent on 'sustainability'. They only scored fair, however, on 'accessibility', 'welcoming' and 'marketing'. All Local Nature Reserves were rated as of 'city' importance within the hierarchy, but displayed a range of overall quality from fair to excellent.

*Cemeteries and Churchyards*

The three cemeteries that were surveyed were all rated as excellent in the quality audit, reflecting high levels of management. The only factor on which they were not rated as excellent was 'community involvement'. They were the only green space type to rate excellent on 'marketing' and 'welcoming'.

## 6.2. Analysis of Quality by Theme

*Accessibility*

Accessibility (meaning access for people with mobility impairments to and within green spaces) across Plymouth is generally good. Overall, 107 green spaces were rated as excellent for accessibility, 66 as good, 42 as fair and only 7 as poor (these being mainly informal green spaces). Cemeteries and

parks and gardens scored best overall for accessibility, while Local Nature Reserves came out as only fair.

*Welcoming*

Plymouth's green spaces currently perform poorly in relation to welcoming (which refers to the quality of entrances and signs/ information). Overall, 70 green spaces were rated as poor on this theme, 114 were rated as fair, 31 as good and only 7 as excellent (these being the cemeteries and a few informal green spaces and parks and gardens). These findings show that Plymouth's green spaces are generally not as welcoming to visitors as they could be.

*Design*

The quality of design (layout of the green space and integration with the neighbourhood) across Plymouth's green spaces is excellent. Overall, 156 green spaces were rated as excellent, 56 as good, 10 as fair and none as poor.

*Management and Maintenance*

Overall, green spaces score well on this theme (referring to the condition and maintenance of green space). Overall, 56 were rated as excellent, 114 as good, 49 as fair and only 3 as poor.

*Conservation and Heritage*

Green spaces average good on this theme (referring to the importance and management of biodiversity and heritage). Local Nature Reserves and cemeteries come out best, with informal green spaces only rated as fair. Overall, 39 green spaces were rated as excellent (mainly Local Nature Reserves, cemeteries and a few natural green spaces), 110 as good, 59 as fair and 14 as poor (these being mainly informal green spaces).

*Safe and Secure*

The audit rated green spaces as good overall on this theme (which refers to how well used the space is and how safe it feels), with cemeteries, parks and gardens and informal green spaces averaging an excellent rating. Overall, 118 spaces were rated as excellent, 86 as good, 17 as fair and only 1 as poor (most of those with fair or poor ratings being informal green spaces).

*Community Involvement*

The audit rated community involvement (referring to use of green space for community activities and events) as good overall, with parks and gardens scoring best. Overall, 53 green spaces were rated as excellent, 94 as good, 65 as fair and 10 as poor (these being mainly informal green spaces).

*Marketing*

The audit rated marketing (referring to availability of information or publicity about green spaces) as only fair overall. In total, 155 green spaces were rated as poor, 41 as fair, 17 as good and only 9 as excellent. These findings show that there is currently a widespread lack of effective marketing of Plymouth's green spaces.

*Sustainability*

Sustainability (referring to management practices such as pesticide use and management of waste) was rated as good overall, with Local Nature Reserves and cemeteries performing best on this theme. Overall, 67 green spaces were rated as excellent, 94 as good, 55 as fair and 6 as poor (most of those rated fair or poor being informal green spaces).

Table 10 – Averaged Green Space Quality Scores by Theme and Primary Function (%)

| | Parks and gardens | Informal | Natural | Local Nature Reserves | Cemeteries | Average criteria score[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Design | 87 | 82 | 87 | 69 | 91 | 81 |
| Safe and Secure | 84 | 80 | 76 | 76 | 100 | 75 |
| Community Involvement | 81 | 64 | 69 | 69 | 67 | 68 |
| Accessibility | 79 | 77 | 67 | 61 | 87 | 66 |
| Management and Maintenance | 72 | 69 | 64 | 69 | 83 | 68 |
| Sustainability | 70 | 62 | 73 | 79 | 80 | 68 |
| Conservation and Heritage | 69 | 60 | 75 | 83 | 85 | 65 |
| Welcoming | 53 | 43 | 45 | 57 | 92 | 49 |
| Marketing | 47 | 33 | 41 | 56 | 83 | 50 |
| Average Score | 73 | 67 | 69 | 73 | 89 | |

[1] Excluding cemeteries

Table 11 – Green Space Quality Score by Function and Hierarchy

| | Hierarchy | Number of sites | Range (%) | Average (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parks and gardens | City | 11 | 55 - 92 | 81 |
| | Local | 20 | 50 - 83 | 68 |
| Informal | City | 5 | 65 - 76 | 72 |
| | Local | 143 | 45 - 87 | 67 |
| Natural | City | 12 | 65 - 86 | 75 |
| | Local | 27 | 50 - 80 | 66 |
| Local Nature Reserves | City | 8 | 54 - 80 | 73 |
| Cemeteries | City | 3 | 83 - 94 | 89 |

# 7. Accessibility of Green Spaces

The distance that people have to walk to their nearest accessible green space (whether 'local' or 'city', covering all primary functions) has been measured for the Green Space Strategy and in the Sustainable Neighbourhood Assessments.

Figure 9 (Appendix 2) shows areas of access deficiency that have been identified using a straight line distance measurement. In most cases, deficiency is due to lack of accessible green space within approximately a five minute walk of where people live or work, but in some cases deficiency is due to severance factors (for example, the A38 may prevent people walking to their nearest green space). It shows that nearly every neighbourhood in Plymouth contains areas of local access deficiency. Not all of the identified deficiency areas are in residential areas – they also cover industrial, dockyard, port and other employment areas.

# 8. Customer Research

A significant level of customer research has taken place to inform the development of this Strategy. Understanding the views of people who use Plymouth's green spaces is vital to help identify priorities for investment. It provides a users' view on quality to complement the findings from the green space audit on quality. It also helps to inform the identification of local accessibility distance thresholds and local quantity standards.

Key findings are -

- Cleanliness, safety and quality are the dominant factors affecting customer satisfaction.
- The most frequently visited green spaces are parks and gardens, followed by informal green space and natural green space.
- The majority of people will travel up to 5 minutes to visit a green space, with the occasional travel journey time of up to 15 minutes to go somewhere for a longer period of time.
- The further the journey to a green space, the longer the time spent in that destination.
- The main reasons why people are not willing to visit green spaces are personal safety fears, dog mess, litter and poor maintenance standards.
- People would like to see the re-introduction of park keepers, improved cleanliness and safer green spaces in order to improve the perception and use of green spaces.

## 8.1. What people value most about green space

Figures 1 and 2 both show how the public rated the importance of a series of features in green spaces. They both show that safety and security for users is the highest priority. This finding contrasts with the finding of the green space audit that green spaces are generally safe and secure places to visit. It shows that there is a widespread perception that green spaces are not safe.

The next highest priority identified is cleanliness and prevention of dog fouling. This links to the 'management and maintenance' theme of the quality audit which also showed that improvements could be made.

The public place a high value on local parks, quality of facilities and wildlife/ trees and plants. Signage/ site information are important to the public which

links to the quality audit which found generally poor performance in relation to welcoming and marketing.

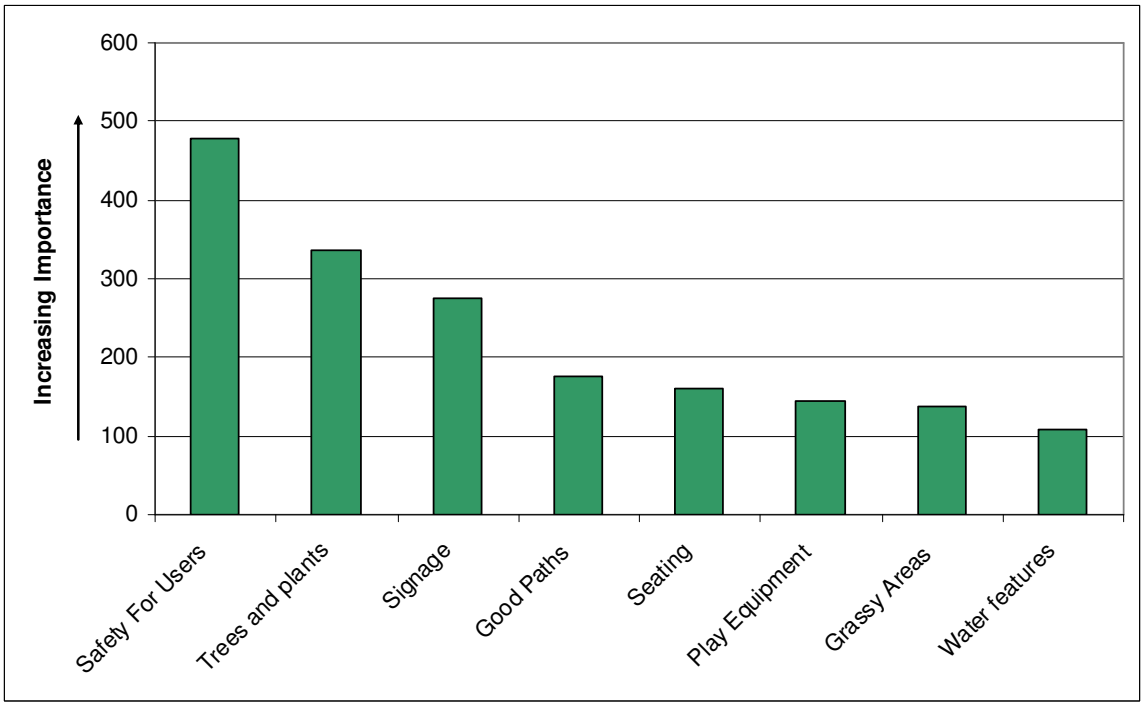



*Figure 1 - What people value most about green space*

Data from public consultation 2007. Total number of people responding

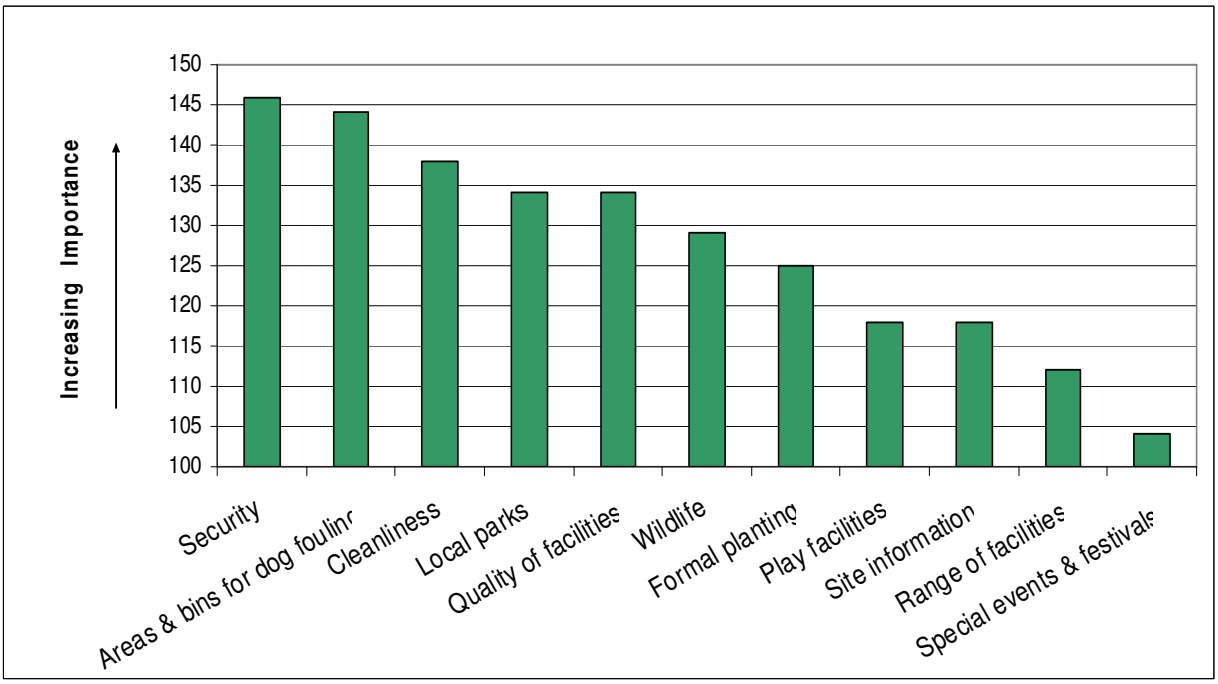



*Figure 2 - The importance attached to different aspects of green space*

Data from public consultation 2007. How people rated the importance of different aspects of green space.

## 8.2. Visits to Green Space

- 64% of people surveyed said that the green space they visit most often is their local green space.
- Most people (61%) walk to their preferred green space followed by 28% who drive, 7% who take the bus and 4% who cycle.
- 45% of people surveyed take less than 5 minutes to reach their preferred green space while 26% take 5 – 10 minutes and 18% take 10 – 15 minutes. Very few people travel more than 15 minutes to access green space.

This data shows a positive situation in that well over half of those surveyed take less than ten minutes to reach their preferred green space (which in most cases is their local green space) and almost two thirds walk. It also shows the importance of local green space.

Figure 3 shows that the green spaces that are most frequently visited are parks, followed by countryside and woodlands. This emphasises the importance of parks within green space provision. Green spaces with more specialist functions like children's play, playing fields, allotments, the coastline and cycle paths are less frequently visited because they are visited for specific purposes and in the case of play, playing fields and allotments have specific user groups.

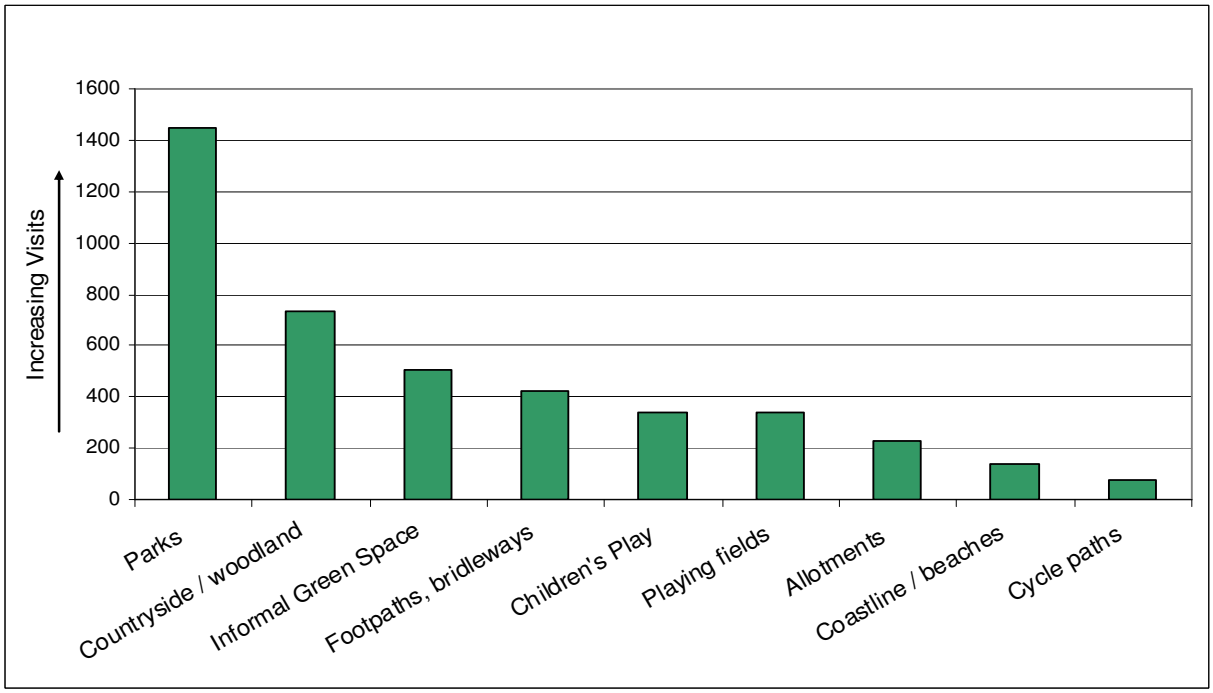



*Figure 3 - What types of green space do people visit most often?*

[1] Data from public consultation 2007. Total number of responses.

Figure 4 shows the main reasons given for visiting green space. The most popular activity is exercise or active recreation. This is closely followed by relaxation and also to interact with nature. This demonstrates that we should be looking to provide multifunctional green spaces that will appeal to as many people as possible throughout the City. It highlights the importance of providing places for nature in more green spaces.

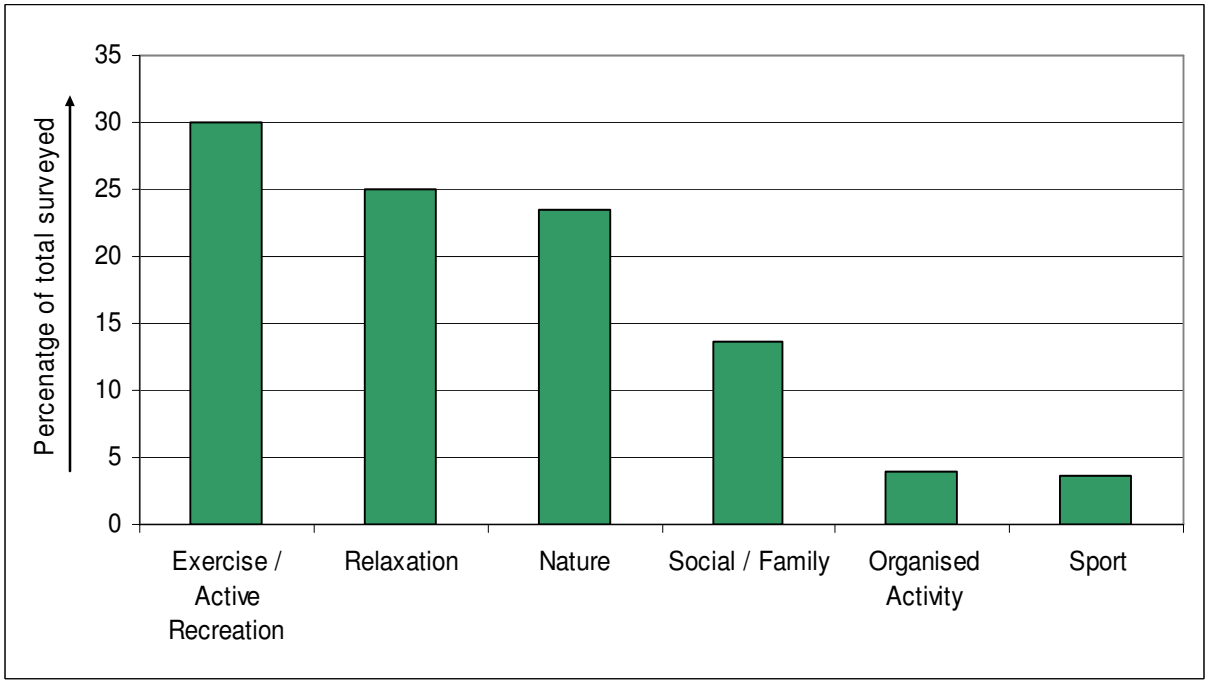



*Figure 4 - Reasons for visiting green space*

Data from public consultation 2007. Percentage of total responses.

## 8.3. Making Plymouth's green spaces more attractive

When asked what would make Plymouth's green spaces more attractive, the biggest issues identified were: improving cleanliness followed by improving safety. This reiterates the findings above about what people value most in green spaces. As an answer to solve both these issues, people thought park wardens would be beneficial. These results are shown in Figure 5.

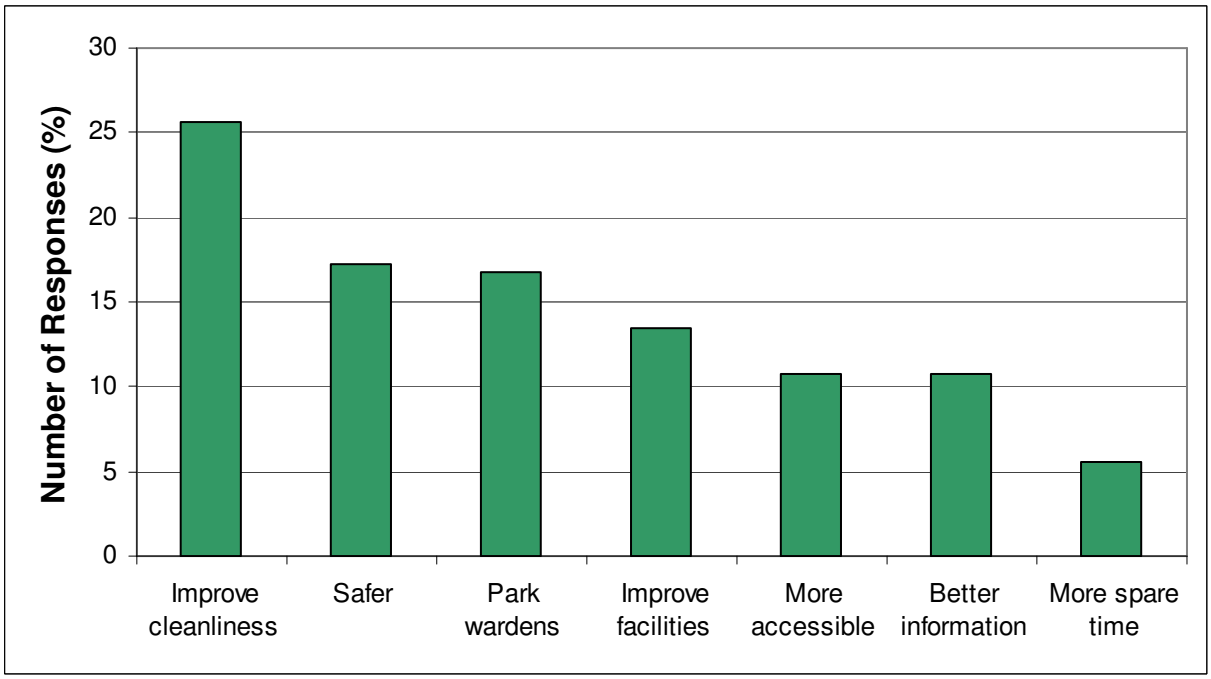



*Figure 5 - What would make green spaces more attractive to visit?*

Data from public consultation 2007. Percentage of total responses.

# 9. Equipped Play Space

Traditionally, children's play has been equated with formal equipped play areas. Recently, a more holistic view of play has emerged which recognises the importance of informal/free as well as formal/static play opportunities. Green spaces play a vital role in helping children and young people to learn a variety of skills through play and social interaction. Exploring the wider environment, particularly wilder spaces such as woodlands, streams and wildlife areas, provides the freedom to choose what they do and where they go, stimulating the imagination and testing boundaries.

Figure 10 shows the distribution of equipped play spaces managed by the City Council by neighbourhood and in relation to accessible green space (equipped privately-managed play areas). The figure shows an uneven distribution, with some neighbourhoods, such as Derriford and Higher Compton, having no equipped play areas at all.

Figure 10 also shows areas of the City where there is no equipped play area within a 10 minute walk (equating to a 600m walk or 400m as the crow flies). A number of neighbourhoods, including Plympton St Maurice, Goosewell, Plymstock, Mutley and Greenbank, Stoke, Hartley and Mannamead, Derriford and Crownhill have residential areas which have no equipped play area within a 10 minute walk. Conversely, some neighbourhoods are well provided with play areas with a choice of several within a 10 minute walking distance.

Equipped play areas are expensive to maintain and vary in their quality and use. Over the last few years the City Council has selectively removed a number of equipped play areas that were no longer economic to maintain in order to focus resources and provide better quality facilities.

The figure shows that most play areas are located on accessible green spaces, giving children the opportunity to engage in formal and informal play, but there are a number located within housing or shopping areas where play is more constrained.

Currently, there are 141 equipped play areas in Plymouth that are managed by the City Council. The ratio of council-owned equipped play areas to population in Plymouth is approximately one equipped play area for every 1,707 people. This translates to approximately 0.05 hectares for every 1000 population (assuming an average size of 800 $m^2$ per play space to take account of a mix of 'LEAPs' and 'NEAPs').

The Plymouth Play Strategy identifies the need to provide more play facilities for young people (aged 10 to 18), including indoor and outdoor facilities, youth

zones and chill out spaces. The Play Strategy contains a proposal to develop chill out zones and youth shelters in the following neighbourhoods – Southway, Leigham, Chaddlewood, Plymstock, Hooe and Keyham – to be funded by Big Lottery.

# 10. Local Needs

It is important that Plymouth has sufficient green spaces and play spaces to serve the whole City, but also that everyone in the City has easy access to a green space and play space of a good quality. In order to analyse the distribution of green space and play space within the City, the Green Space Strategy divides Plymouth into three sub-areas – north of the A38, south of the A38 and east of the River Plym (see Figure 11). Each sub-area has different characteristics in terms of the built environment, green space provision and population density.

## 10.1. Plymouth South

The southern area of the City is well served by parks and gardens, many of which are of 'city' importance and have scored good or excellent on the quality audit. Central Park and The Hoe attract visitors from across the City, the sub-region and beyond, while the smaller parks of Devonport, Victoria, Freedom Fields, Mount Wise and Tothill are also judged to be of 'city' importance. A series of improvements are planned for Central Park as set out in the Plymouth Local Development Framework to enhance its status as a park of City and regional significance.

The south of Plymouth contains the City's three main cemeteries – Weston Mill, Efford and Ford Park and has one Local Nature Reserve (Efford Marsh) and one proposed (Ham Woods). The natural green space consists of woodland along the River Plym and Ham Woods, and the shoreline at Hoe and Tinside, all of which scored at least 'good' on the quality audit. While the south of the City is well served with informal green space, only a small area is judged to be of 'city' importance (Brickfields and Devil's Point).

The south of the City is more densely populated than the north and the east, reflecting the fact that this is the most historic part of Plymouth, with much housing being pre World War Two in age. The dense population (123,958 in 2001) means that there is less green space per person than in the rest of the City (approximately 3.64 hectares/1000 population). Analysis of access to green space shows deficiency in the following neighbourhoods –

- The East End
- The City Centre, Barbican and Mutley/Greenbank (around the University)
- Hartley and Mannamead, Higher Compton and Lipson and Laira

- Ford, North Prospect, Beacon Cross and Pennycross
- St Budeaux, Kings Tamerton and Weston Mill, Barne Barton, Keyham, Ford, Devonport and Stonehouse.

Many of the accessible green spaces in the south are small in size and therefore limited in the range of functions they can provide. The impact of the Dockyard along the River Tamar is clear from this analysis, as access to the waterfront is blocked along much of this area, as is much of Cattedown because of the port. There are also areas of play deficiency in Mutley and Greenbank, Stoke, Hartley and Mannamead.

Analysis of a number of indicators of deprivation across neighbourhoods in Plymouth has identified five priority neighbourhoods, all in the south of the City, that face a number of cross-cutting issues of deprivation. These are: Stonehouse, Devonport, City Centre, North Prospect and Barne Barton. All of these priority neighbourhoods currently have deficiency of access to green space.

To summarise, Plymouth South experiences the most pressure on its green spaces because of its large and relatively dense population. Much of the population currently lives further than a five minute walk to the nearest accessible green space. Many of the green spaces are small and limited in function, although the south also has sites of 'city' or even international importance. The greatest levels of deprivation are experienced in some of the southern neighbourhoods, highlighting that local needs are not fully met at present.

The Plymouth Local Development Framework proposes a considerable growth in the number of dwellings in this part of Plymouth to 2021 (up to 8,800) – mainly in the waterfront areas of Devonport, Millbay, City Centre, Sutton Harbour and the East End. This will place further pressure on already scarce green space.

## 10.2. Plymouth North

The north of Plymouth is well served by Local Nature Reserves (of which there are six) and by natural green space, much of which is of 'city' importance. This reflects the topography of the area which is characterised by wooded valleys. Part of this area borders the River Tamar. There is one park (Butt Park) which is of 'local' importance and the north is well served with 'local' informal green spaces.

The north of the City has a lower population and is less densely populated than the south (with a 2001 population of 63,534), reflecting the fact that most of the housing in this area has been built since 1945 at relatively low

densities. This means that there is a higher provision of green space per person than in the south (approximately 9.55 hectares/1000 population).

There are also fewer green space deficiency areas than in the south, but there is deficiency either side of the A386 at Derriford and to the east of the A386 at Crownhill. Much of the potentially outstanding green space bordering the River Tamar in the West is inaccessible or of 'local' importance. There is also a deficiency of play space in Crownhill and Derriford.

The Plymouth Local Development Framework Area Action Plan for Derriford/Southway sets out proposals for 3,900 new dwellings in Derriford and Southway by 2021 (with further growth planned beyond this).

## 10.3. Plymouth East

The east of Plymouth contains two parks of 'city' importance – Saltram Park (which attracts international visitors) and Radford Park. The area is well provided with informal green spaces, most of which are of local importance but four of 'city' importance (Plym Valley, Mount Batten, Staddiscombe and Jennycliff). The east of Plymouth does not currently have any Local Nature Reserves (although Plymstock Woods is a proposed Local Nature Reserve), but it has important natural green spaces (Plymstock Woods, Hardwick Wood and Hooe Lake). The districts of Plympton and Plymstock are separated by a broad belt of countryside, most of which is currently farmland with restricted public access.

With a 2001 population of 53,228, the east has the smallest population of any of the sub-areas. Most of the housing is post 1945 and has been built at relatively low densities. The amount of green space per person is, therefore, relatively high (approximately 7.82 hectares/1000 population). However, despite the green character of much of this area, analysis of access to green space has revealed that there are several areas with a deficiency of accessible green space. This includes –

- Colebrook, Newnham and Woodford in Plympton
- Elburton and Plymstock.

Therefore, despite generous provision of green space, local needs are not fully met in that there are residents in several areas who have to travel further than five minutes to their nearest accessible green space. There are also areas of Plympton St Maurice, Goosewell and Plymstock that are deficient in play space.

Proposals in the Plymouth and South Hams Local Development Frameworks are for considerable housing growth in this part of the City to 2021 and

beyond. The North Plymstock Area Action Plan proposes that 1,500 dwellings be built in Plymstock Quarry, while a new community of 5,500 dwellings is proposed at Sherford on the Plymouth/South Hams boundary. This part of Plymouth will, therefore, experience a considerable population growth over the next 15 years, placing pressure on the area's green space.

# 11. Summary

This Background Report has analysed the current provision of green space in Plymouth in terms of its primary and secondary functions, the quantity and quality of accessible green space and the distribution of green space around the City. A more detailed analysis has been given of three sub-areas of Plymouth: south, north and east.

It has shown that Plymouth is well provided with a range of accessible green space, but that it is unevenly distributed and there are several areas of the City where people do not live and work within a five minute walk of an accessible green space. The south of the City has the least green space per person, and many of the spaces are small. The north of the City has the most generous provision of green space. The East of the City has a good balance of green space, but still has areas of access deficiency. The quality of Plymouth's green spaces is generally good, with many excellent spaces. The main concerns over quality are in relation to the fact that many green spaces are not as welcoming as they could be and are poorly marketed. Customer research has highlighted public concerns over issues of security and cleanliness.

With Plymouth's population expected to grow in all sub-areas of the City over the next 15 years, it is essential that the City has a Green Space Strategy to redress current deficiencies and to meet the needs of the growing population.

# 12. Appendix 1 – Green Space Audit

| | |
|---|---|
| Date of Assessment: | |
| Site Name: | |
| Reference | |
| Sub Area | |
| Total Area (Ha.) | |

| FUNCTIONS | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Horticultural Features | | Allotment | |
| Amenity Green Space | | Cemetery | |
| Natural & Semi-Natural Green Space | | Local Nature Reserve | |
| Playing Fields | | Other Use(s): (Please List) | |
| Formal Children / Teenager Play Space | | | |
| Formal Park or Garden | | | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Primary Function of Green Space | |
| Position in Hierarchy | |
| Value | |

| Summary of Facilities | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Artificial Sports Pitch | | Sports Pitch(es) | |
| Bowling Green | | Putting Greens | |
| Car Parking | | Seating | |
| CCTV / Other Security | | Signage | |
| Changing Facilities / Pavilion | | Site based staff (Rangers / Wardens, maintenance staff, games attendants, offices) | |
| Defined Park Boundary | | | |
| Dog Bins | | Tennis / Netball Courts | |
| Footpath | | Toilets | |
| Formal / Memorial beds / Floral displays | | Visitor and/or Information Centre | |
| Reasonable access to park areas for disabled persons | | War Memorials / Statues / Sculptures / Follies | |
| Hard surface for play / Kick about area / Kicking wall | | Water Features / Fountains | |
| Litter Bins | | Woodland Walk | |

Additional facilities

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| On site supervision | | Access<br>Is the site part of or linked to a designated long distance recreation route or circular walk? | |
| Access<br>Does the open space adjoin other open spaces or is it linked via a footpath, cycle way to other open spaces? | | Landscape character (Landform)<br>Flat / Undulating / Slope | |
| | | Landscape character<br>Open / Closed / Mixed | |
| Access<br>Is there a bus stop near the open | | Landscape character<br>Tree Coverage, Landscape | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| space? | | Character, Tree Coverage | |
| Access<br>Is there a car park within or near the open space? | | Landscape character<br>Formal / Informal / Mixed | |

GENERIC ASSESSMENT (all sites)

Scoring Scale
1: Very Poor, 2: Poor, 3: Reasonable, 4: Good, 5: Excellent, 0: Not Present

| ACCESSIBILITY | Existing | Potential | Gap |
|---|---|---|---|
| Specific consideration of disabled users in the design of the open space (or provision of specialist equipment or facilities) | | | |
| Internal paths and facilities suitable for people with disabilities | | | |
| Ease and safety of access between surrounding housing/streets and internal paths for pedestrians | | | |
| Sub total - Accessibility | | | |
| % score | | | |
| **WELCOMING** | **Existing** | **Potential** | **Gap** |
| Entrances appropriately located, visible and accessible for all | | | |
| Entrances attractive and welcoming and well maintained | | | |
| Signs within the open space are well situated and designed | | | |
| Availability of information on how to contact owner / manager | | | |
| Availability of general information about the park, facilities and events | | | |
| Sub total - Welcoming | | | |
| % score | | | |
| **DESIGN** | **Existing** | **Potential** | **Gap** |
| Acceptability of noise levels | | | |
| Value as visual screen/buffer | | | |
| Balance of areas of shade and sunlight | | | |
| Facilities appropriate to the size and location of the open space | | | |
| Relationship to built surroundings and features | | | |
| Design of paths in terms of linkages and desired lines in the site | | | |
| Views of the open space from the housing / street scene | | | |
| How well does the area contribute to appearance of the neighbourhood | | | |
| Sub total - Design | | | |

| GENERIC ASSESSMENT (all sites) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| % score | | | |

| GENERIC ASSESSMENT (all sites) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE | Existing | Potential | Gap |
| General 'cared for' appearance | | | |
| Maintenance of grass | | | |
| Design, location and repair of lighting | | | |
| Appearance re litter | | | |
| Condition re dog fouling and availability of dog bins | | | |
| Location and repair of litter bins | | | |
| Maintenance of footpath surfaces | | | |
| Location and repair of seating | | | |
| Maintenance and definition of boundaries | | | |
| Maintenance and definition of boundaries | | | |
| Vandalism and graffiti | | | |
| Is a site management plan in place | | | |
| Sub total - Management & Maintenance | | | |
| % score | | | |
| CONSERVATION & HERITAGE | Existing | Potential | Gap |
| Appropriate management and maintenance of parkland tree species | | | |
| Appropriate management and maintenance of woodland areas | | | |
| Appropriate management and maintenance of plants and shrubs | | | |
| Evidence of active management to encourage biodiversity | | | |
| Biodiversity objectives integrated into site management plan | | | |
| On or off site interpretation relating to biodiversity or heritage interest | | | |
| Appropriate management and maintenance of heritage structures or original features | | | |
| Appropriate conservation of landscape structure | | | |
| Sub total - Conservation & Heritage | | | |
| % score | | | |
| HEALTHY, SAFE & SECURE | Existing | Potential | Gap |
| Flow of people through the park (i.e. To achieve self surveillance) | | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Availability of alternative routes and exits in all parts of the open space to avoid entrapment | | | |
| Evidence of persistent vandalism and other anti-social behaviour | | | |
| Level of informal surveillance from neighbouring properties | | | |
| Sub total - Healthy, Safe & Secure | | | |
| % score | | | |
| COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT | Existing | Potential | Gap |
| Meeting the needs of a wide range of visitors | | | |
| Evidence of community activities taking place | | | |
| Importance of space within the neighbourhood | | | |
| Sub total - Community Involvement | | | |
| % score | | | |
| MARKETING | Existing | Potential | Gap |
| Promotion of site as community resource (e.g. website, leaflets, community notice board) | | | |
| Availability of educational or interpretive information available for the site | | | |
| Sub total - Marketing | | | |
| % score | | | |
| SUSTAINABILITY | Existing | Potential | Gap |
| Evidence of sustainable management / maintenance methods being employed | | | |
| Use of pesticides | | | |
| Waste minimisation / recycling | | | |
| Sub total - Sustainability | | | |
| % score | | | |
| TOTAL SCORES – GENERIC ASSESSMENT | Existing | Potential | Gap |
| Total actual scores | | | |
| Average total % scores | | | |

# 13. Appendix 2 – Green Space Maps

*Figure 6 – Green Space by Primary Function*

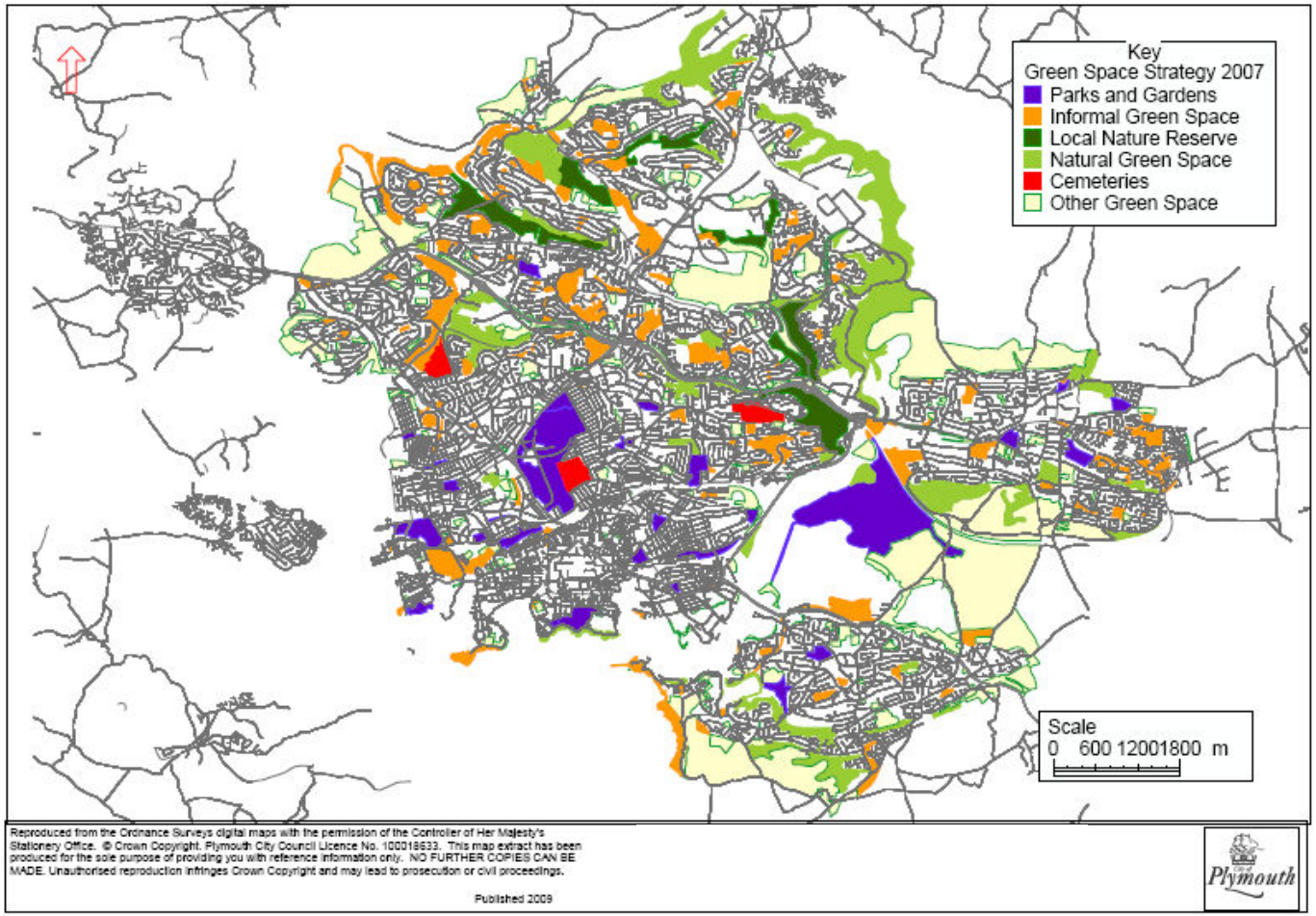


*Figure 7 – Green Space Hierarchy*

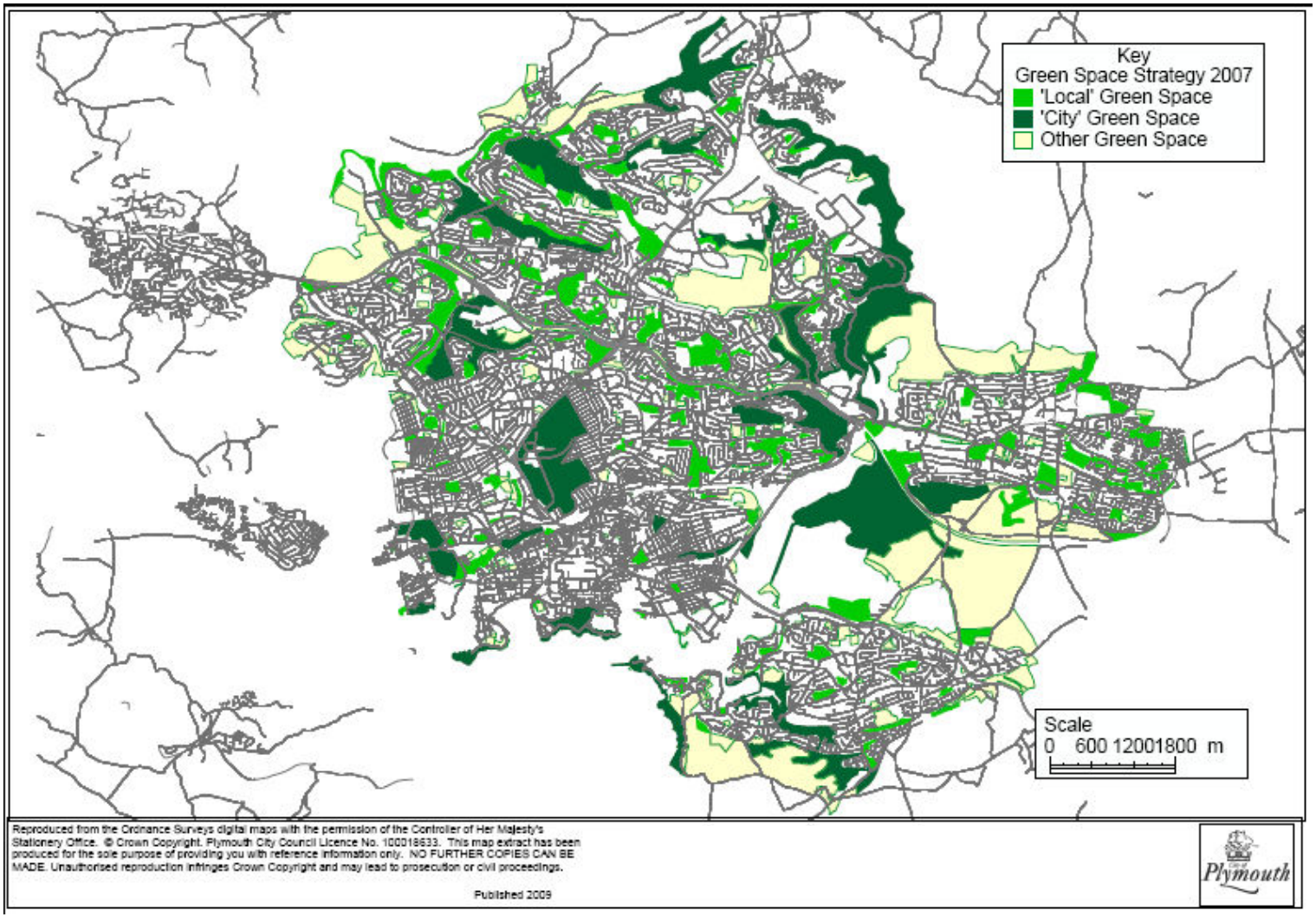


*Figure 8 – Green Space Quality*

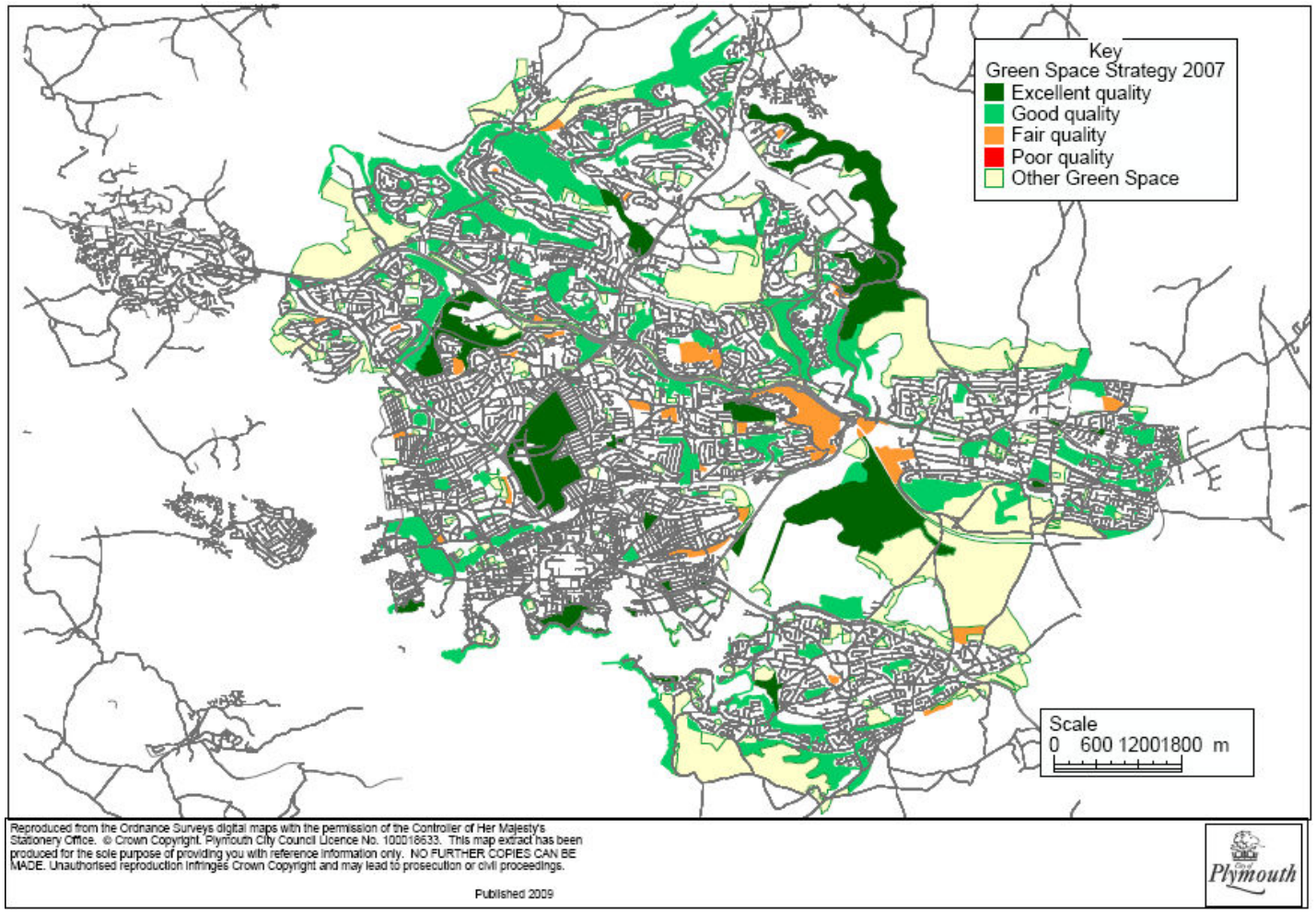


*Figure 9 – Areas Deficient in Access to Green Space*

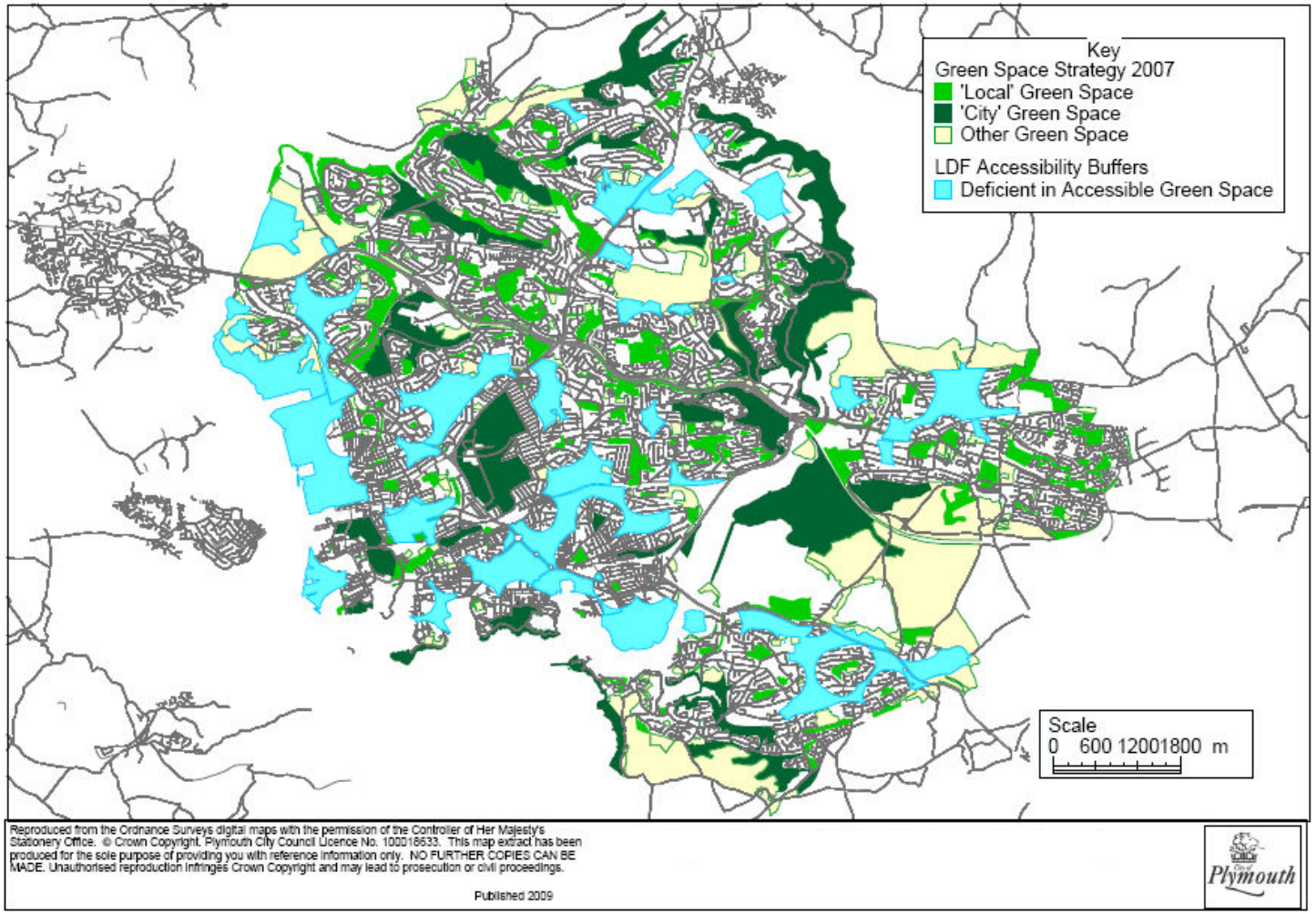


*Figure 10 – Play Areas and Areas Deficient in Play Space*

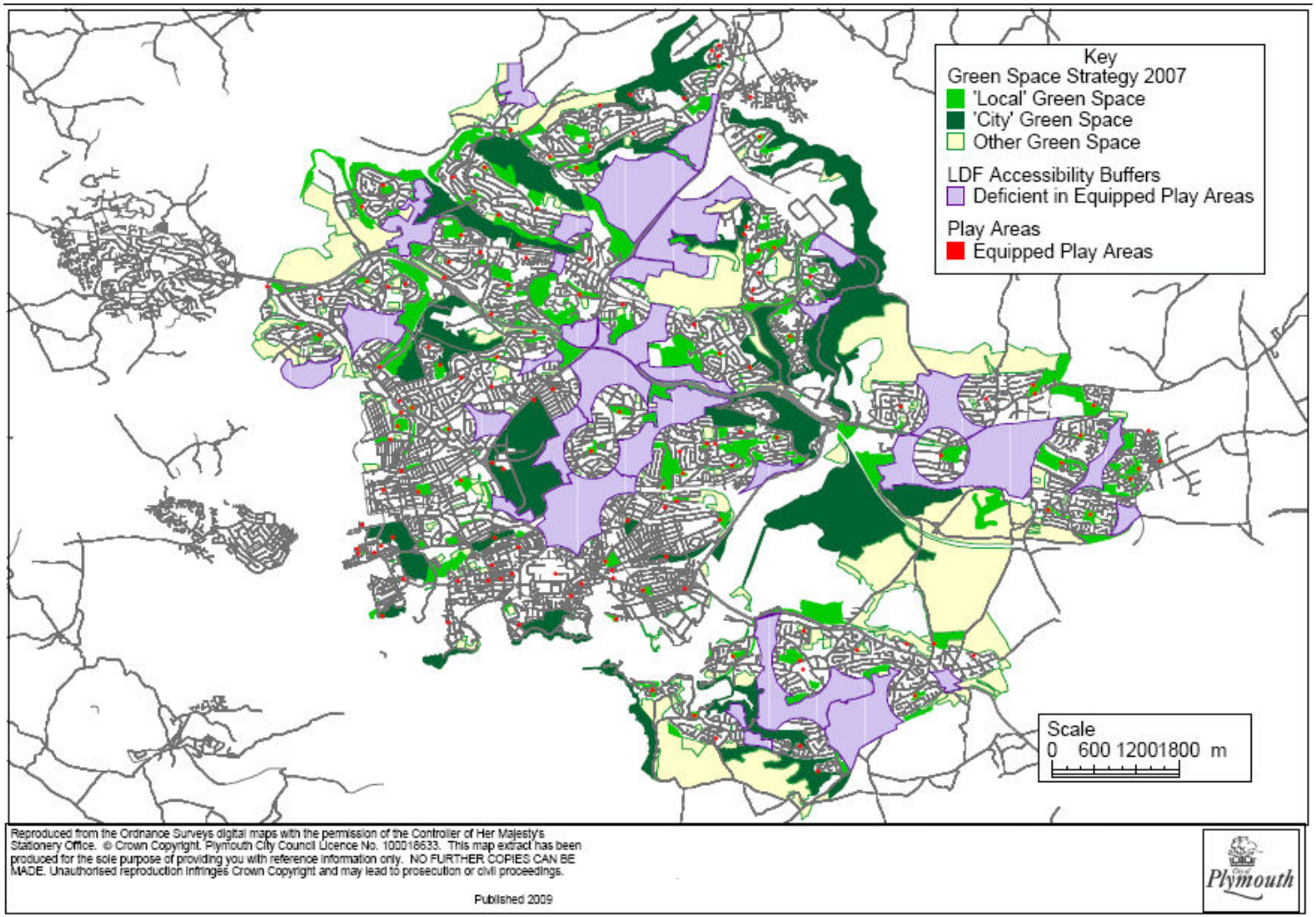


*Figure 11 – Plymouth's Neighbourhoods and Sub-Areas*

