

Cheshire West and Chester Open Space Study 2016 – 2030



**Cheshire West
and Chester**

Open Space Area Profile: Chester

Part 2 of 2

(Final Version March 2017)

ethos
Environmental Planning

Report produced on behalf of Cheshire West and Chester Council by Ethos Environmental Planning

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Open Space Area Profile: Chester

1.0 Introduction

The Cheshire West and Chester (CWAC) Open Space Study is presented in two parts. The main report (part 1 of 2) comprises an overview of the whole study and includes details on local needs, methodology, open space typologies and analysis of provision which combine to make recommendations for future provision and policies for open space in the district. This report is **part 2 of 2**, and comprises open green space area profiles which provide more localised information.

The area profiles have been developed for five areas as shown in figure 1 and 2. These are based on the areas identified in the Local Plan (Chester, Ellesmere Port, Northwich, Winsford and Rural areas) which broadly reflect how regeneration is delivered in the borough (further details are provided in part 1 of the study).

Figure 1 Ward analysis areas (Ellesmere Port, Chester and Rural Areas)

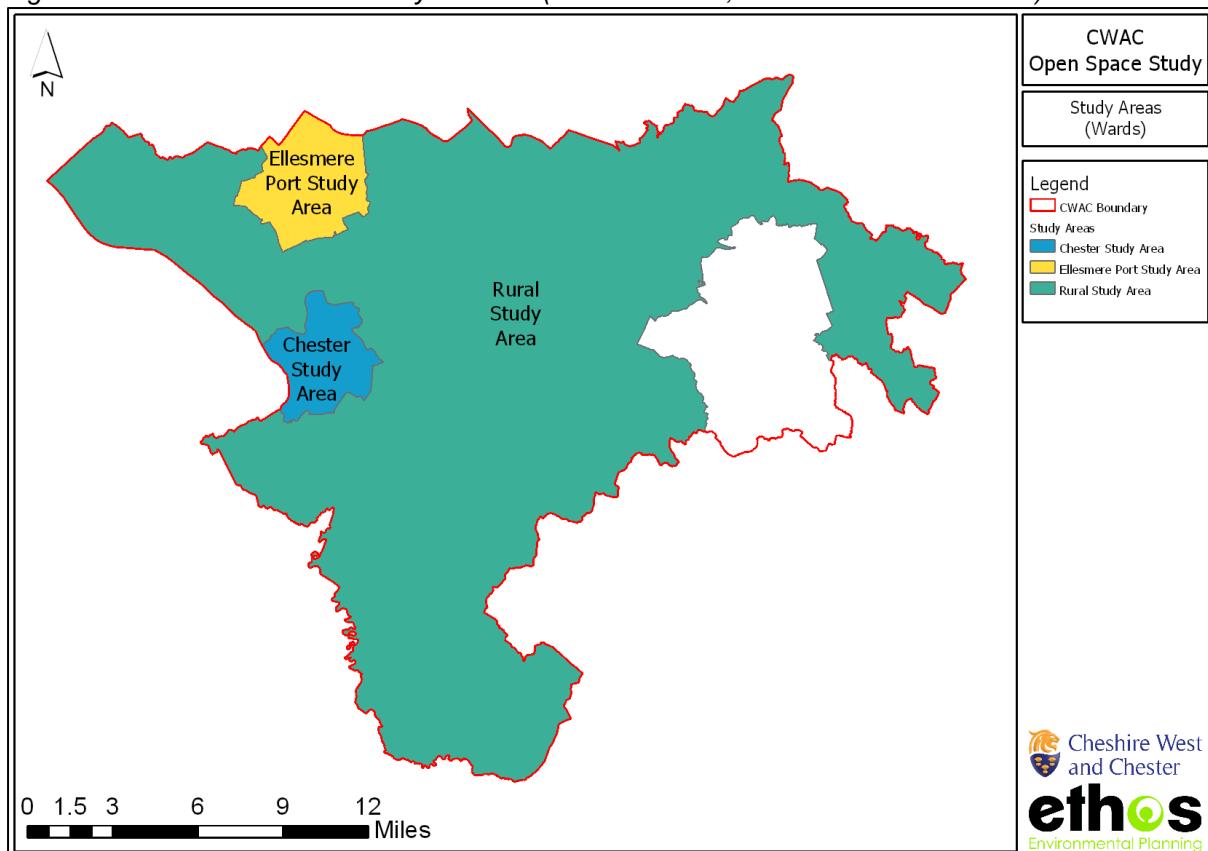
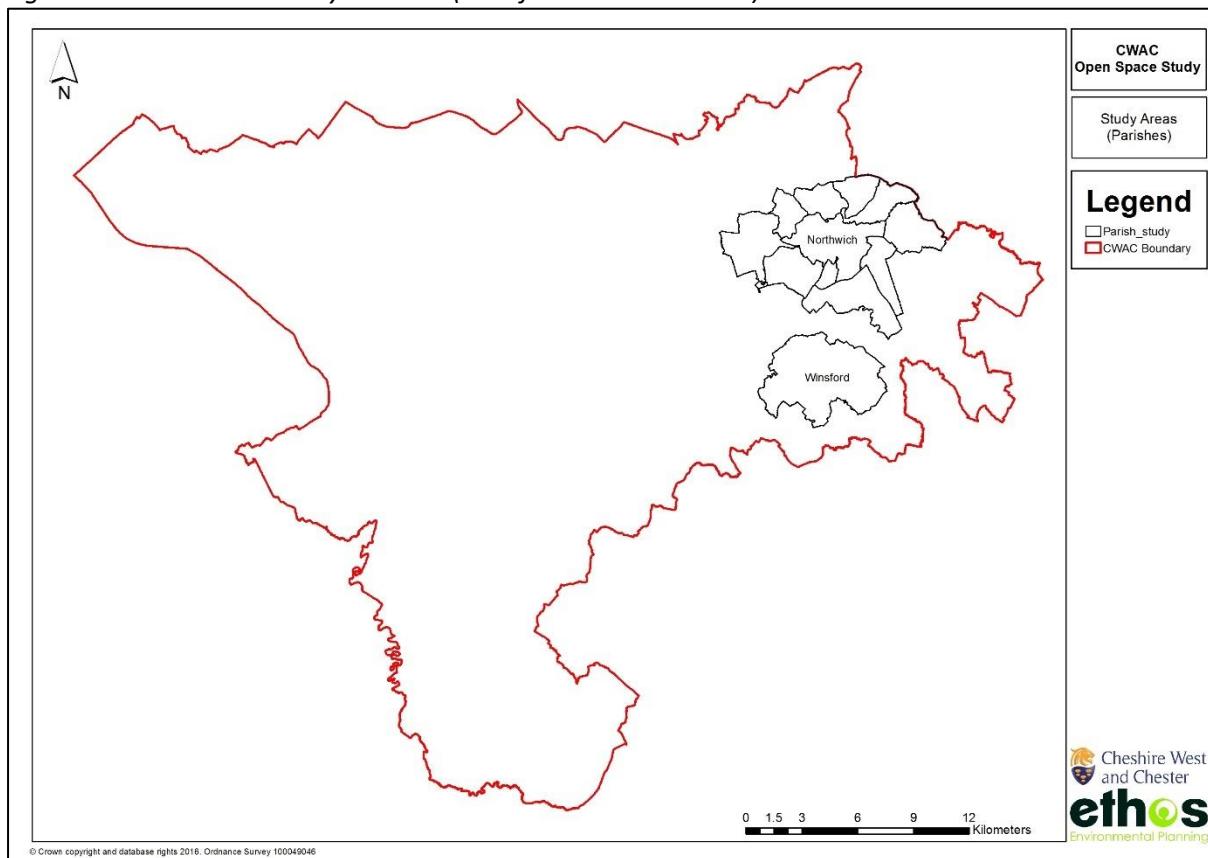


Figure 2

Parish analysis Areas (Winsford and Northwich)



The area profiles should be read in conjunction with the main report (part 1). Each profile includes the following information:

- A description of the area;
- Maps showing the provision of open space;
- Quantitative analysis of current provision of open space'
- Analysis of access to open space;
- Summary of quality issues and opportunities;
- Analysis of future need for open space;
- Priorities for the area.

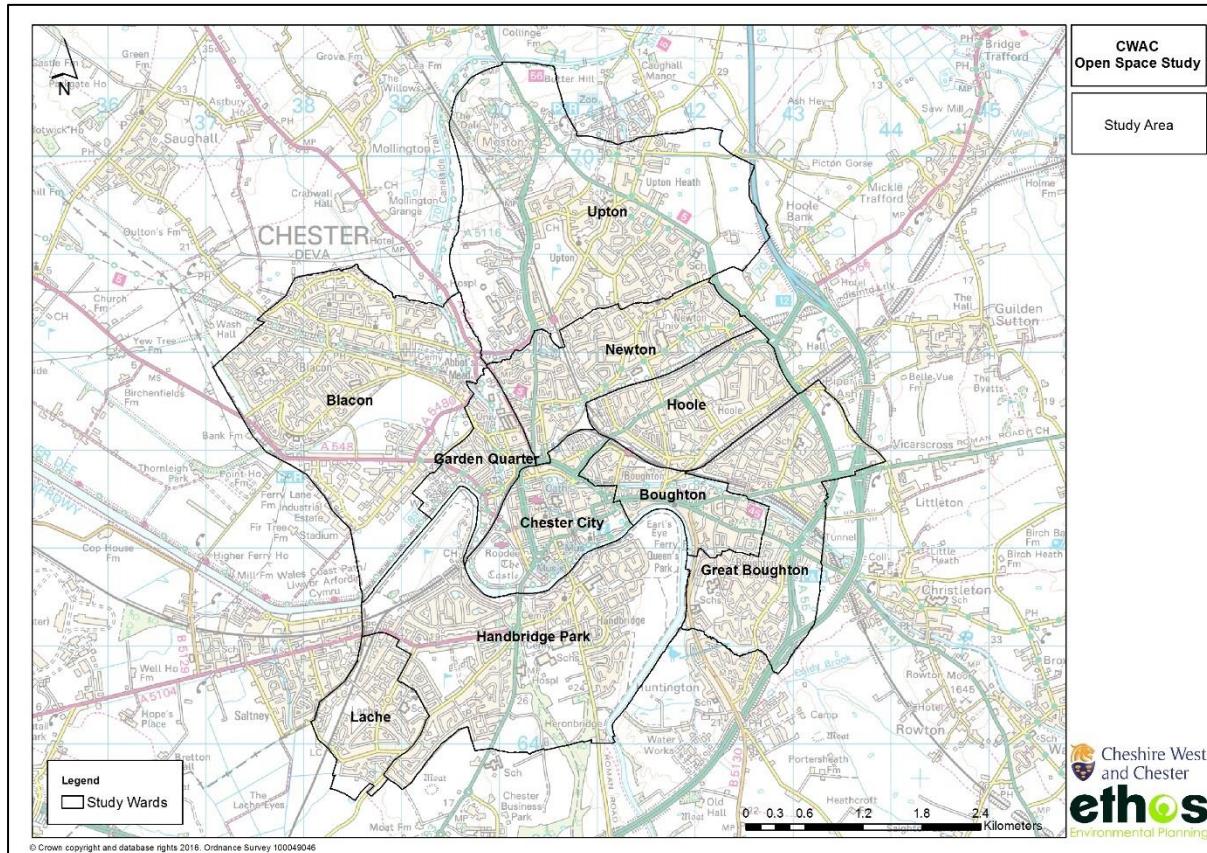
The area profiles are intended to be a starting point to inform other strategies and plans, including neighbourhood plans, planning policies, development control policies; parks and open spaces service and action plans.

All of the maps provided within this section of the report are intended to be used for indicative purposes only. Larger scale maps have been provided as a separate database to the council.

1.1 Geographical Area

The Chester Area Profile comprises the wards of Chester City, Garden Quarter, Blacon, Newton, Hoole, Upton, Boughton, Great Boughton, Handbridge Park and Lache, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 Chester Study Area



1.2 Population

Table 1 Ward population statistics (Census, 2011)

Name	Population
Blacon	13,626
Upton	8,905
Newton	9,556
Hoole	9,359
Garden Quarter	5,318
Chester City	3,853
Boughton	5,444
Great Boughton	8,984
Lache	5,760
Handbridge Park	8,840
Total	79,645

1.3 Chester – Overview of the area

The CWAC Local Plan provides a summary of Chester City:

"The city of Chester is the borough's largest settlement with over 81,000 residents and is a key centre for employment, retail, education and tourism as well as being a main transport interchange and gateway, with direct routes to London, Manchester, Merseyside and North Wales. The city is internationally renowned as a historic city with unique heritage assets particularly Roman remains, the City Walls and medieval Rows.

Chester's rich heritage and large selection of shops make the service industry one of the city's biggest source of income with many tourists travelling to see its historic sites. As a result, this has a complementary benefit to hotels and restaurants improving the city's economy.

Chester benefits from its location and thanks to good transport links is only a short drive away from Liverpool, Ellesmere Port, Northwich, Winsford and across the border to Welsh towns such as Deeside.

Chester is currently aiming to be the must see European destination and as a result is looking into investing over 1.3 billion to achieve this. The Project has been nicknamed the Chester Renaissance and has set out five steps to try and drive a dynamic legacy for the future generations. These steps include:

- 1. Creating a leading regional economic driver - supporting local creativity, learning and entrepreneurs, encouraging inward investment and stimulating business growth;*
- 2. Providing for modern living - a vibrant, distinctive and dynamic place to live for its residents;*

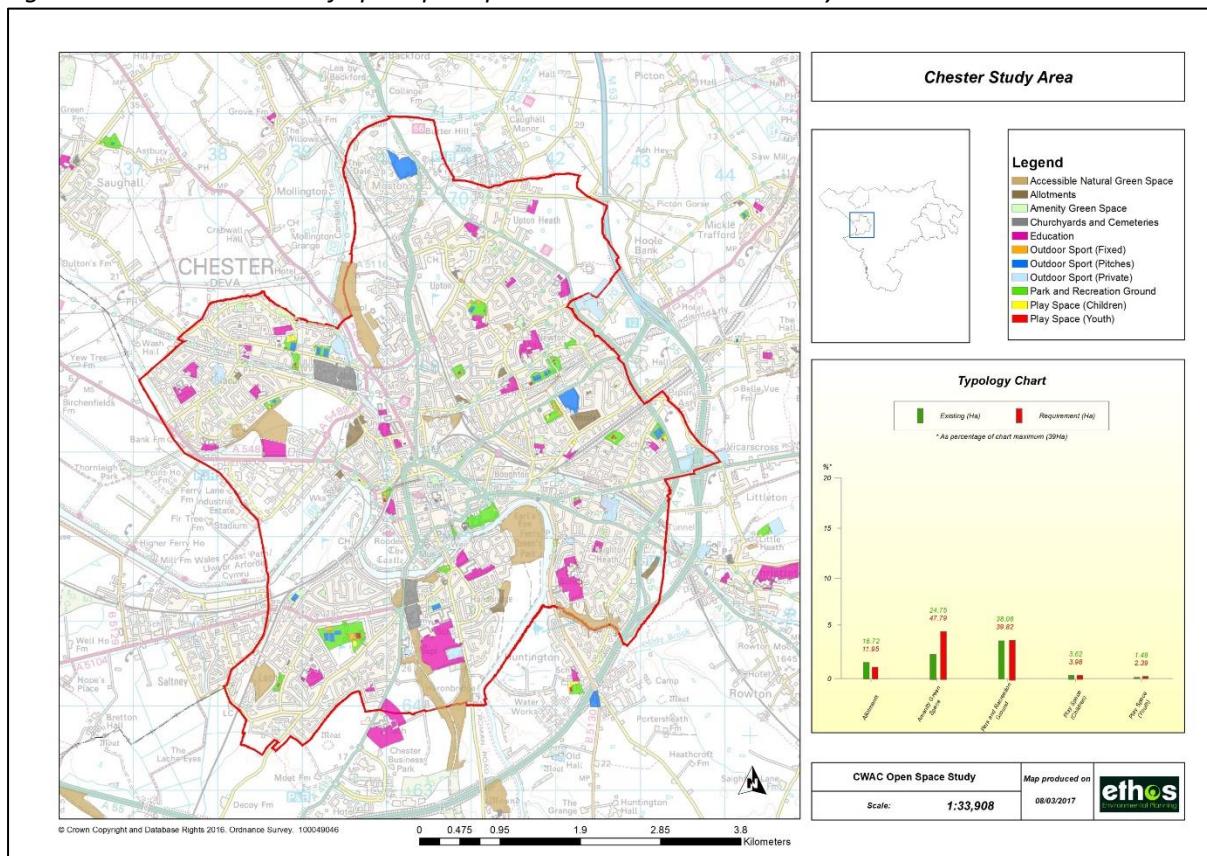
- 3. Developing and supporting a cultural, retail and visitor offer of the highest quality - including the Rows, Theatre, Cathedral and Town Hall;*
- 4. Celebrating its long and varied history and heritage - protecting, promoting and utilizing its assets to enhance their settings and maximize their full potential;*
- 5. Maximizing the opportunities to use the network of green spaces and waterways - improving residents' quality of life"*

2.0 Existing provision of Open Space

This section provides maps showing existing green spaces that have been mapped and included within the study. A map is shown for the overall area, and then individual maps for each of the wards as appropriate. The maps are intended to be used for indicative purposes and large scale maps and a GIS database of sites have been provided as an electronic database to the Council.

2.1 Overview of open space provision in the study area

Figure 4 Overview of open space provision in the Chester Study Area



2.2 Provision by Ward in the Study Area

The following maps show the provision of open space within each of the wards within the Chester study area.

Figure 5 Provision of open space in Blacon

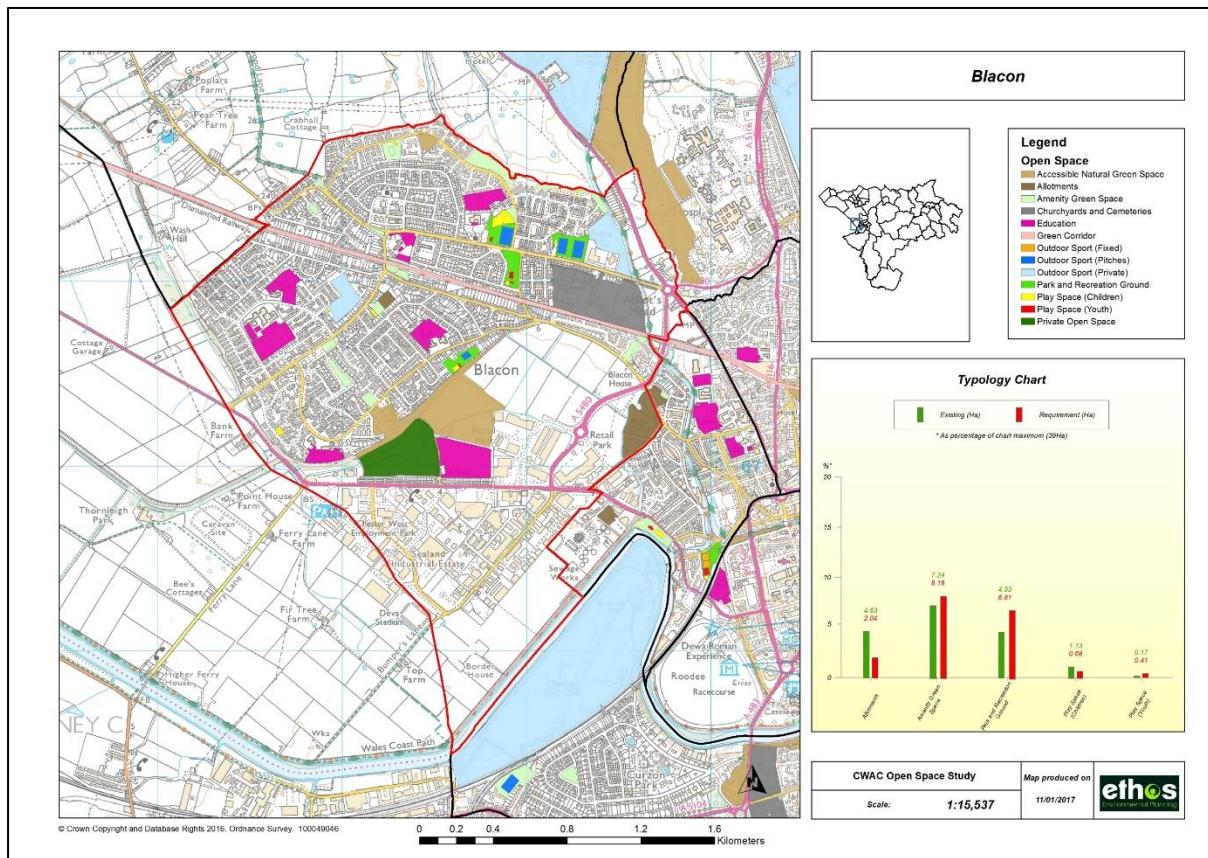


Figure 6 Provision of open space in Upton

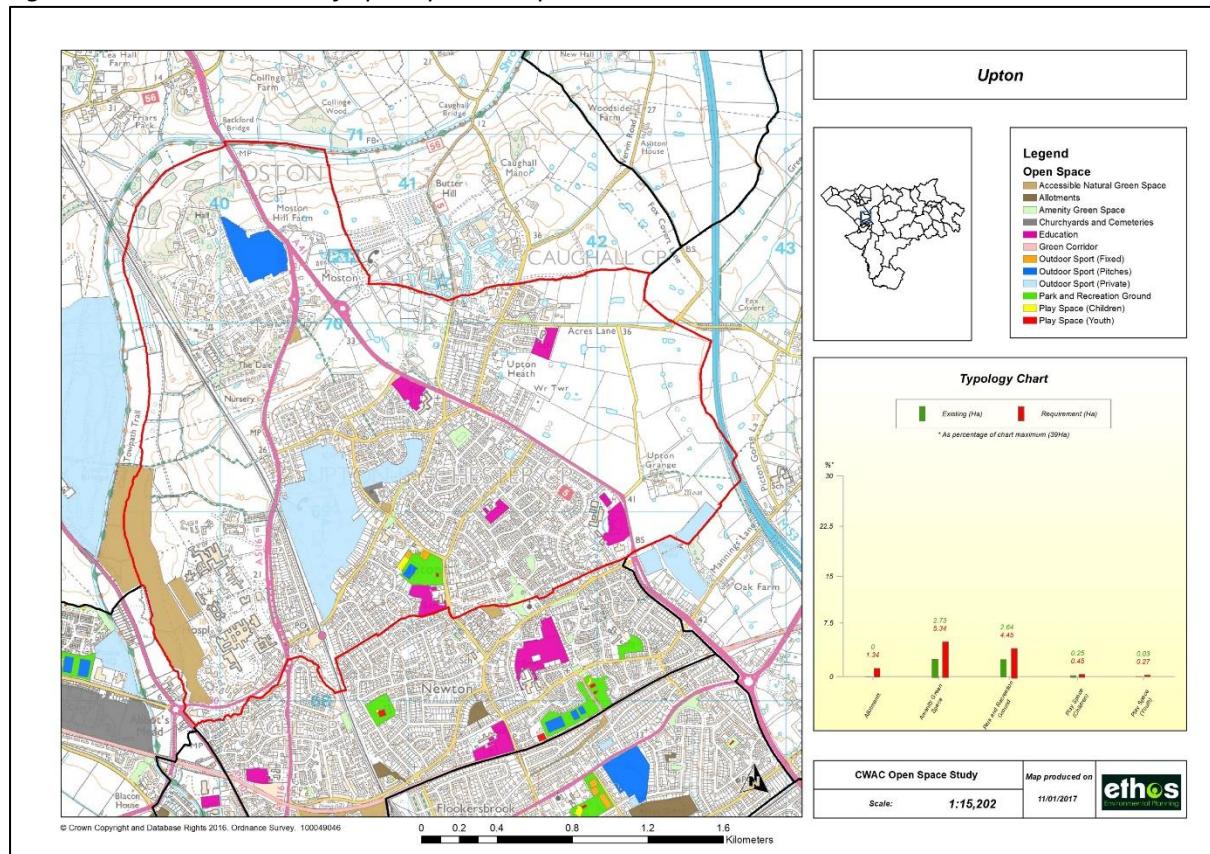


Figure 7 Provision of open space in Newton

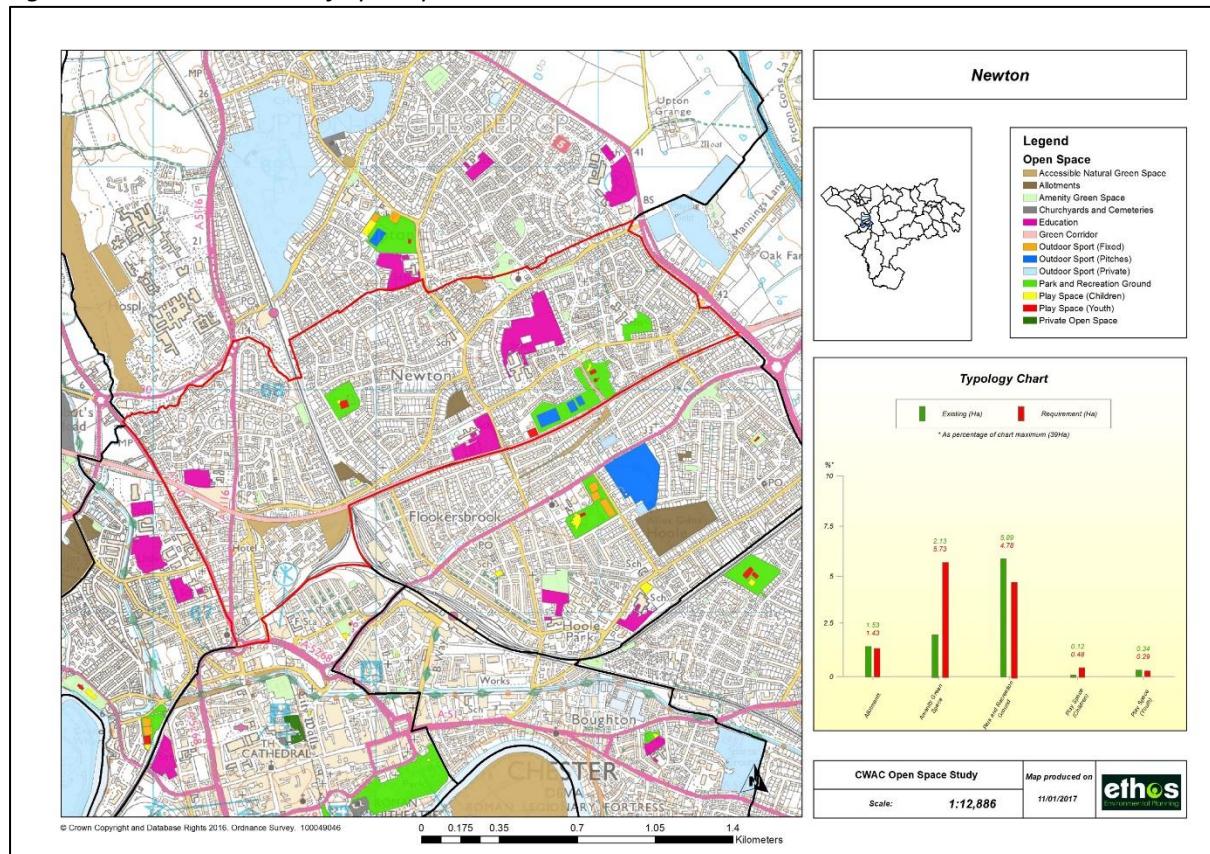


Figure 8 Provision of open space in Hoole

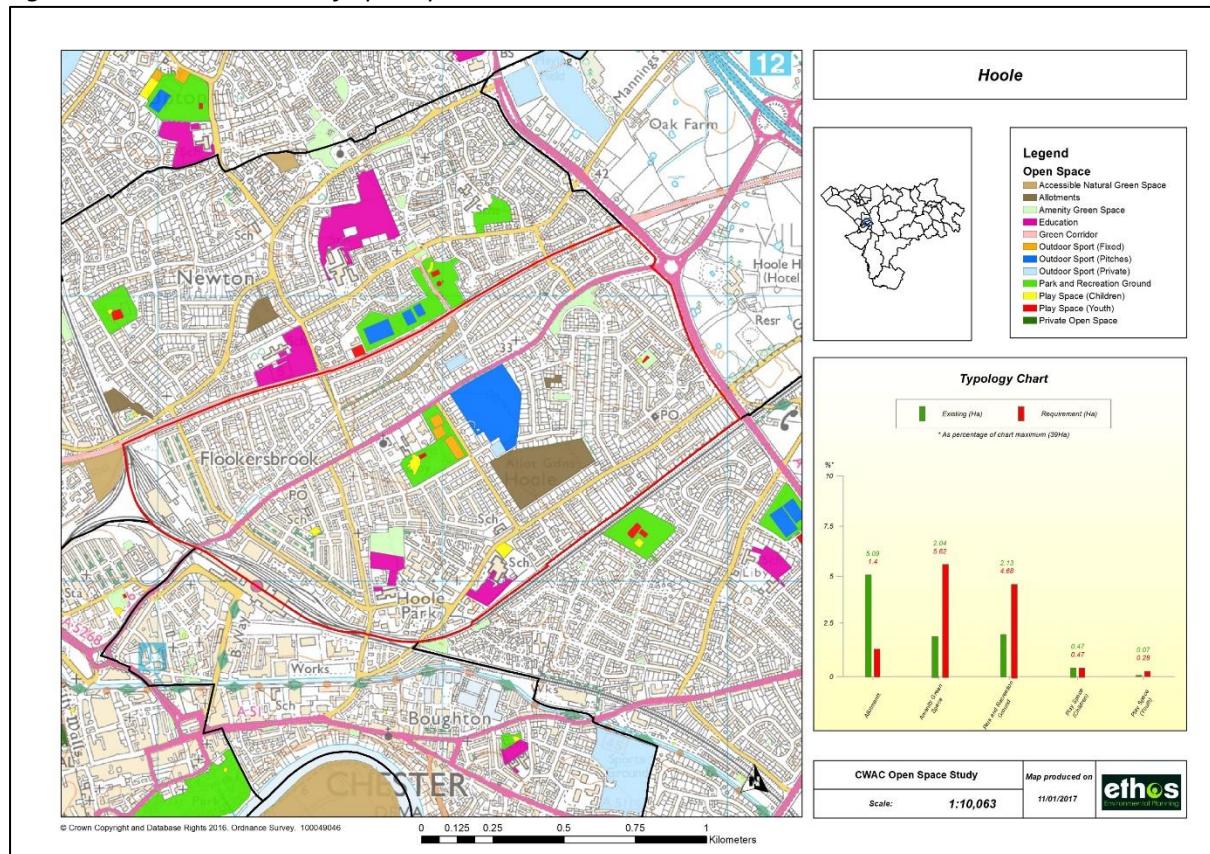


Figure 9 Provision of open space in Garden Quarter

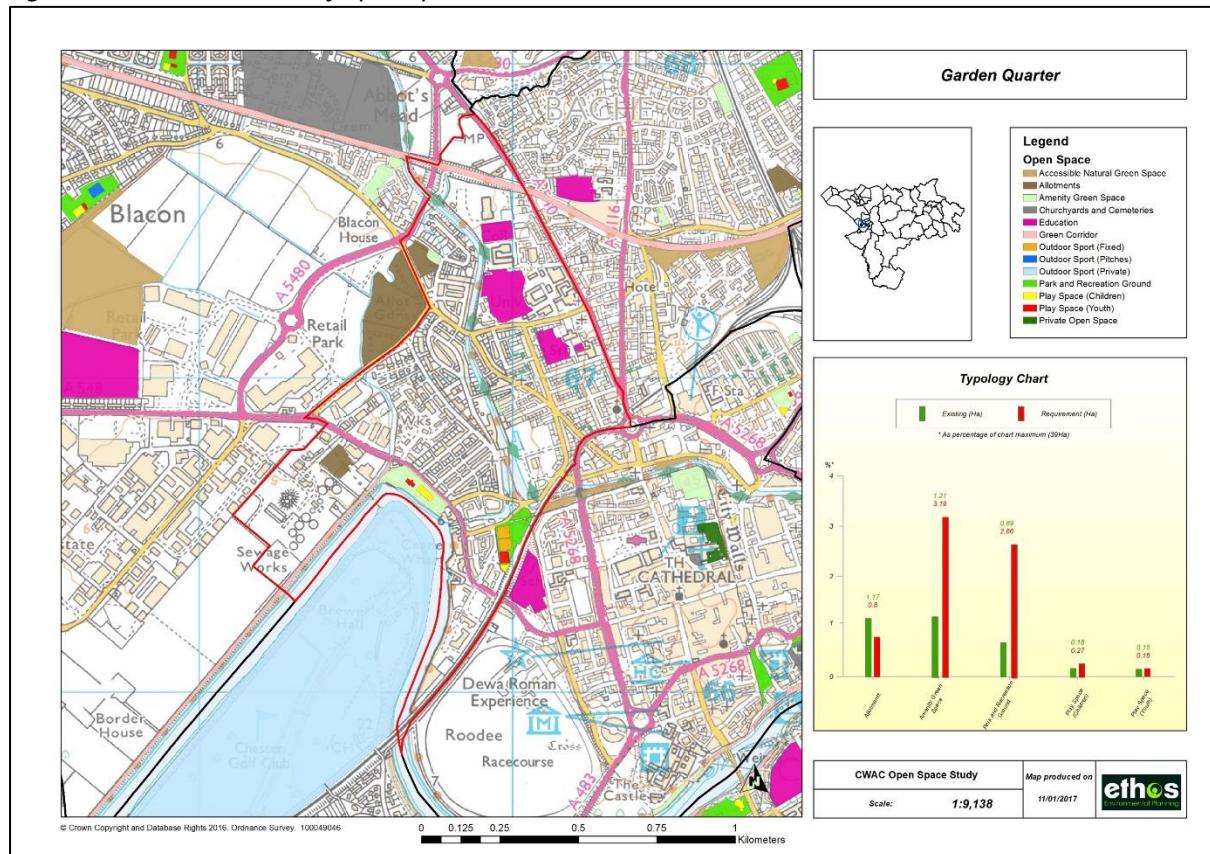


Figure 10 Provision of open space in Chester City

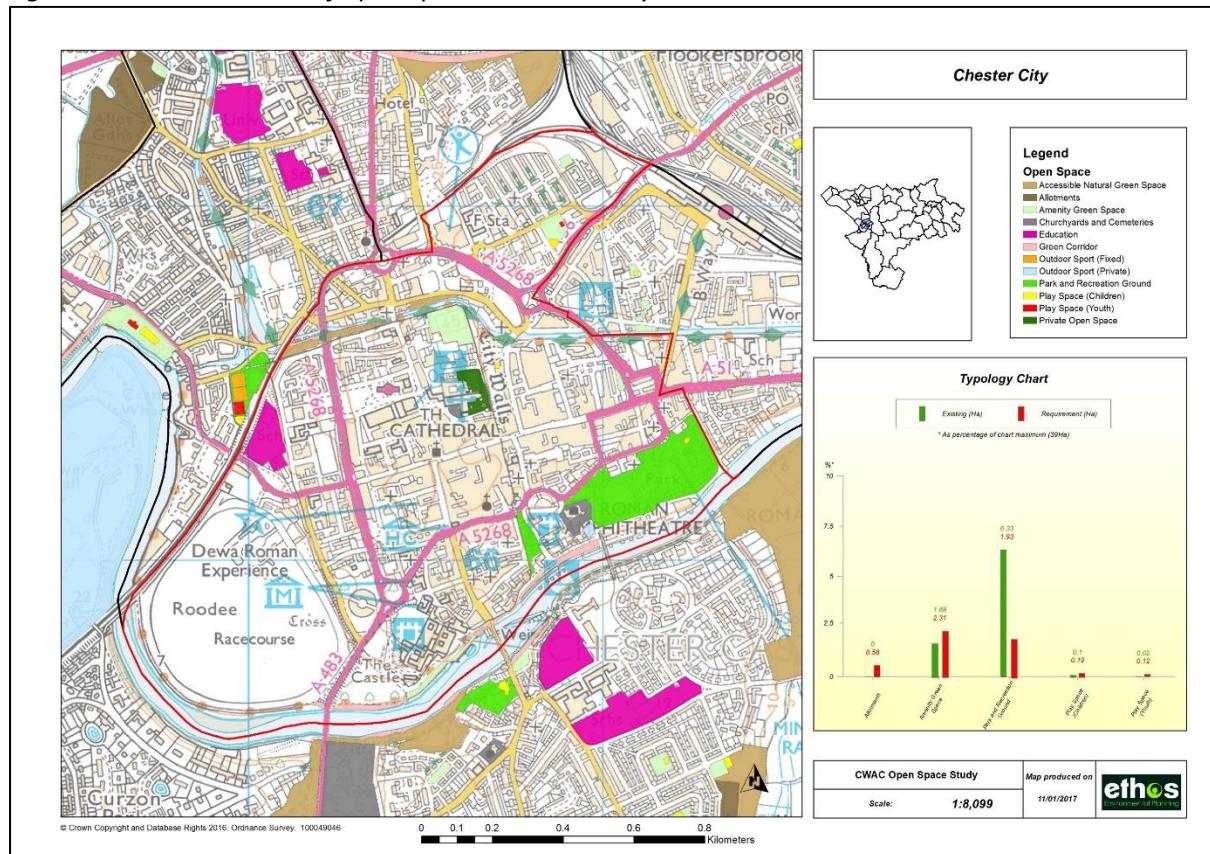


Figure 11 Provision of open space in Boughton

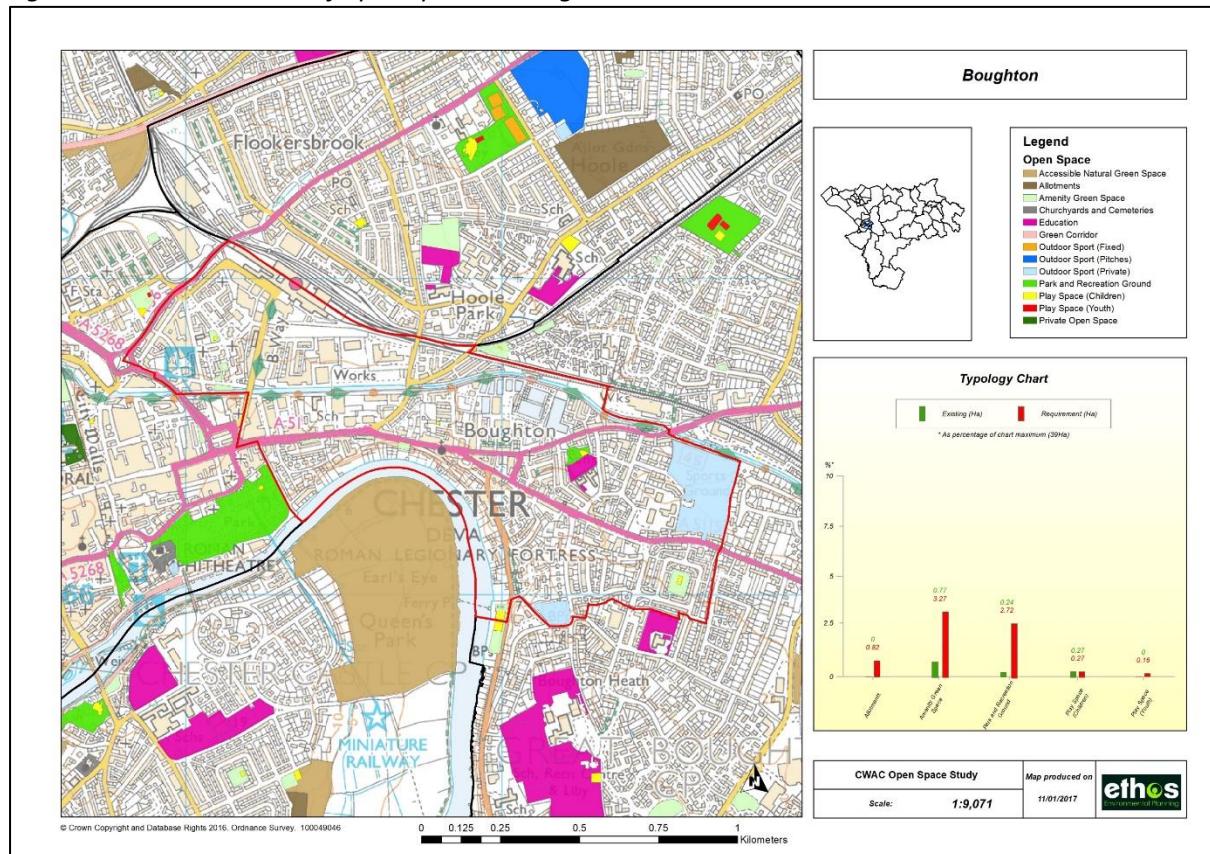


Figure 12 Provision of open space in Great Boughton

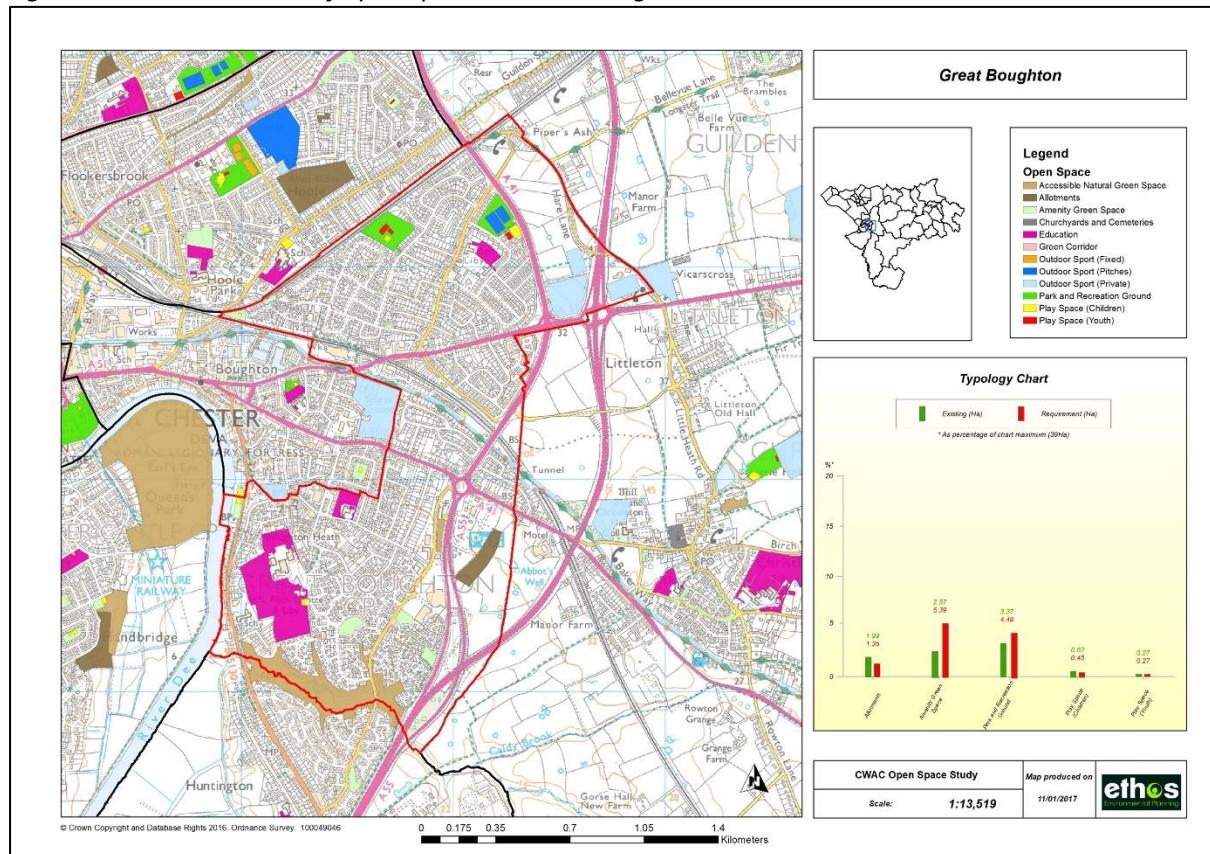


Figure 13 Provision of open space in Handbridge Park

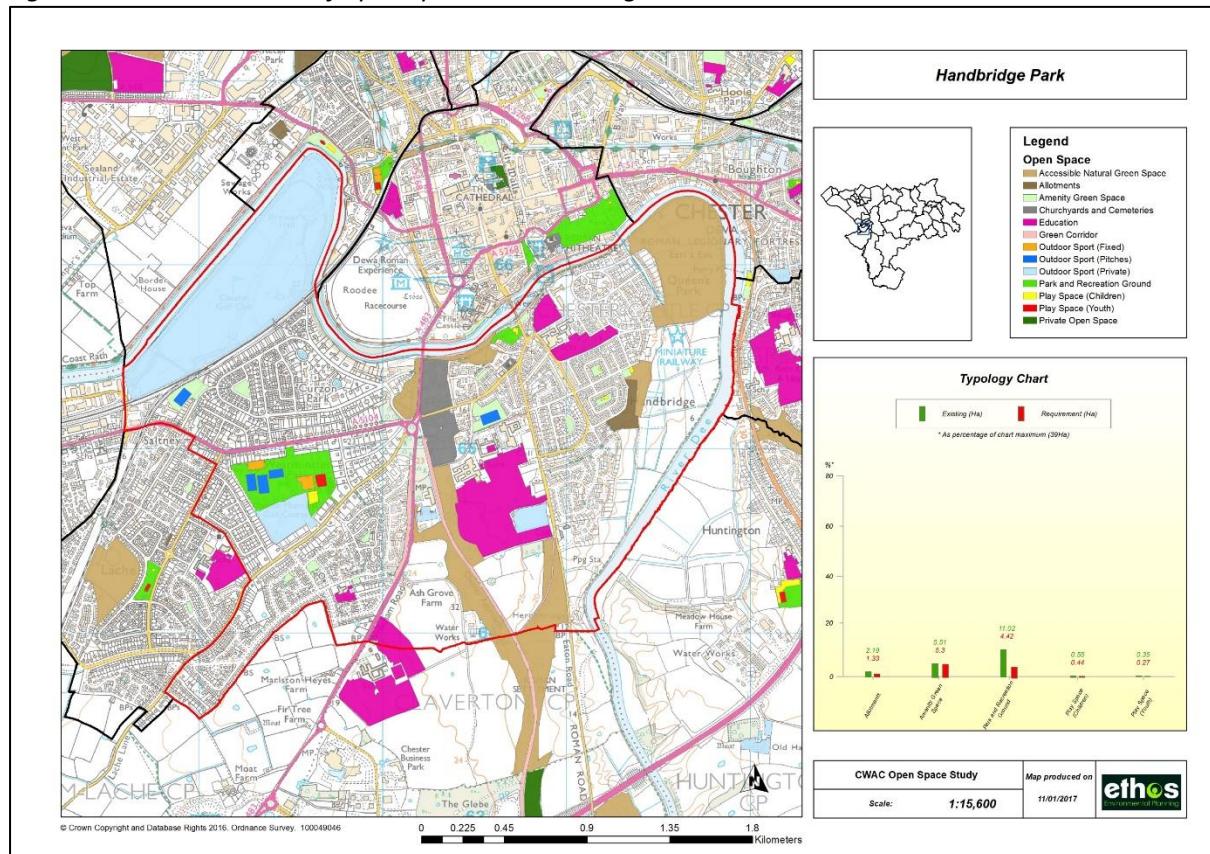
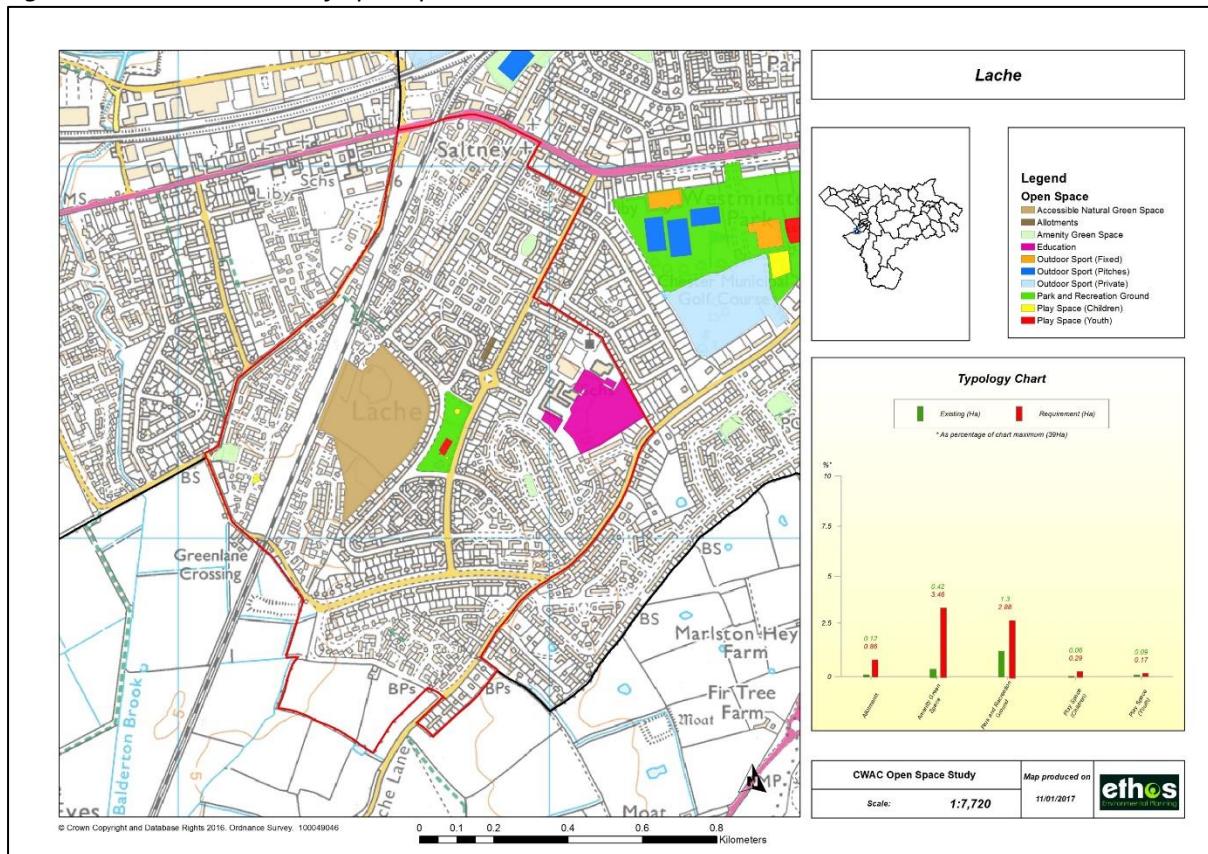


Figure 14 Provision of open space in Lache



3.0 Analysis of existing quantity of Open Space

3.1 Introduction

This section provides an analysis of the existing quantity of open space within the Chester study area. It uses the quantity standards for open space detailed in part 1 of the report, and summarised in table 2.

Table 2 *Summary of open space standards (Quality standards not included here)*

Typology	Quantity standards (ha/1000 population)	Access standard
Allotments	0.15	720 metres or 15 minutes' walk time
Amenity Green Space	0.60 for analysing existing provision of sites > 0.15 ha 1.0 for new provision (combined with natural green space)	480 metres or 10 minutes' walk time
Parks and Recreation Grounds (excluding pitches and fixed sports space)	0.5	720 metres or 15 minutes' walk time
Play Space (Children)	0.05	480 metres or 10 minutes' walk time
Play Space (Youth)	0.03	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time
Natural Green Space	1.0 to include natural and amenity green space for new provision	ANGSt and Woodland Trust for analysing existing provision
Churchyards and Cemeteries	None, but sites mapped and quantity analysed	None
Education	None, but sites mapped and quantity analysed	None
Outdoor Sports Space (Pitches)	None, but sites mapped. Further details provided in playing pitch strategy	None
Outdoor Sports Space (Fixed)	None, but sites mapped. Further details provided in facilities strategy	None
Outdoor Sports Space (Private)	None, but sites mapped	None

Typology	Quantity standards (ha/1000 population)	Access standard
-includes sub typology 'Other' i.e. golf courses and fishing lakes		
Green Corridors	None, but sites mapped	None
Private open space (e.g. paid access sites)	None, but sites mapped	None

Existing quantity figures are also provided for a number of typologies where there are no standards, as such these also do not show figures for required provision (a figure of 0.00 is provided) and supply is 'NA', these typologies are:

- Natural Green Space (as existing provision is assessed using the Natural England ANGST Standards);
- Education;
- Churchyard and Cemetery.

The following section provides tables showing the current quantitative provision of open space within the study area.

3.2 Current quantity provision of open space

The following tables show the existing provision of open space within the Chester study area. Figures are given for the overall study area, and for individual wards. In some areas, open spaces may cross ward boundaries and as such the quantity provision is included within both of those ward totals. Therefore, if individual wards are added together, this may not add up to the overall total figure for the study area. This factor needs to be taken into account when making decisions about local quantity provision.

Table 3 Existing supply of open space across Chester study area

Typology	Existing provision (Ha)	Existing Provision (Ha/1000)	Required Provision (Ha)	Required Provision (Ha/1000)	Supply (Ha)	Supply (Ha/1000)	Overall Supply
Allotments	16.72	0.21	11.95	0.15	4.77	0.06	SUFFICIENT SUPPLY
Amenity Green Space	24.75	0.31	47.79	0.6	-23.04	-0.29	UNDER SUPPLY
Park and Recreation Ground	38.15	0.48	39.82	0.5	-1.67	-0.02	UNDER SUPPLY
Play Space (Children)	3.57	0.04	3.98	0.05	-0.41	-0.01	UNDER SUPPLY
Play Space (Youth)	1.48	0.02	2.39	0.03	-0.91	-0.01	UNDER SUPPLY
Natural Green Space	126.8	1.6	0	0	126.8	1.59	N/A
Education	85.59	1.07	0	0	85.59	1.07	N/A
Churchyards and Cemeteries	21.86	0.27	0	0	21.86	0.27	N/A

Table 4 Supply of open space (hectares) for each ward within the Chester study area

Wards	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Park and Recreation Ground	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)
Blacon	2.59	-0.94	-2.28	0.45	-0.24
Boughton	-0.82	-2.5	-2.48	0	-0.16
Chester City	-0.58	-0.63	4.4	-0.09	-0.1
Garden Quarter	0.37	-1.98	-1.97	-0.09	-0.01
Great Boughton	0.64	-2.82	-1.12	0.17	0
Handbridge Park	0.86	0.21	6.6	0.11	0.08
Hoole	3.69	-3.58	-2.55	0	-0.21
Lache	-0.74	-3.04	-1.58	-0.23	-0.08
Newton	0.1	-3.6	1.11	-0.36	0.05
Upton	-1.34	-2.61	-1.81	-0.2	-0.24

As can be seen from the table 3 above, within the Chester study area, there is an overall under supply of most typologies of open space, with the exception of allotments. The total shortfall for each typology is:

- Amenity Green Space 23.04 Ha
- Parks and Recreation grounds 1.67 Ha
- Play Space (Children) 0.41 Ha

• Play Space (Youth)	0.91 Ha
Total <u>shortfall</u>	26.03 Ha

Table 4 shows how provision is generally poor across the whole study area with Handbridge Park being the only ward which has sufficient supply across all open space typologies. Provision does vary across the study area with some wards meeting the standards and others falling below.

4.0 Analysis of existing access to Open Space

4.1 Existing access to open space

This section provides maps showing access to different types of open space across the study area using the CWAC access standards (as summarised in table 5). More detailed maps showing access in each ward have been provided as an electronic appendix.

Table 5 CWAC access standards

Typology	Access standard
Allotments	720 metres or 15 minutes' walk time
Amenity Green Space	480 metres or 10 minutes' walk time
Parks and Recreation Grounds	720 metres or 15 minutes' walk time
Play Space (Children)	480 metres or 10 minutes' walk time
Play Space (Youth)	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time
Natural Green Space	ANGSt and Woodland Trust for analysing existing provision

Figure 15 Access to Allotments across the Chester Study Area (720 metre buffer)

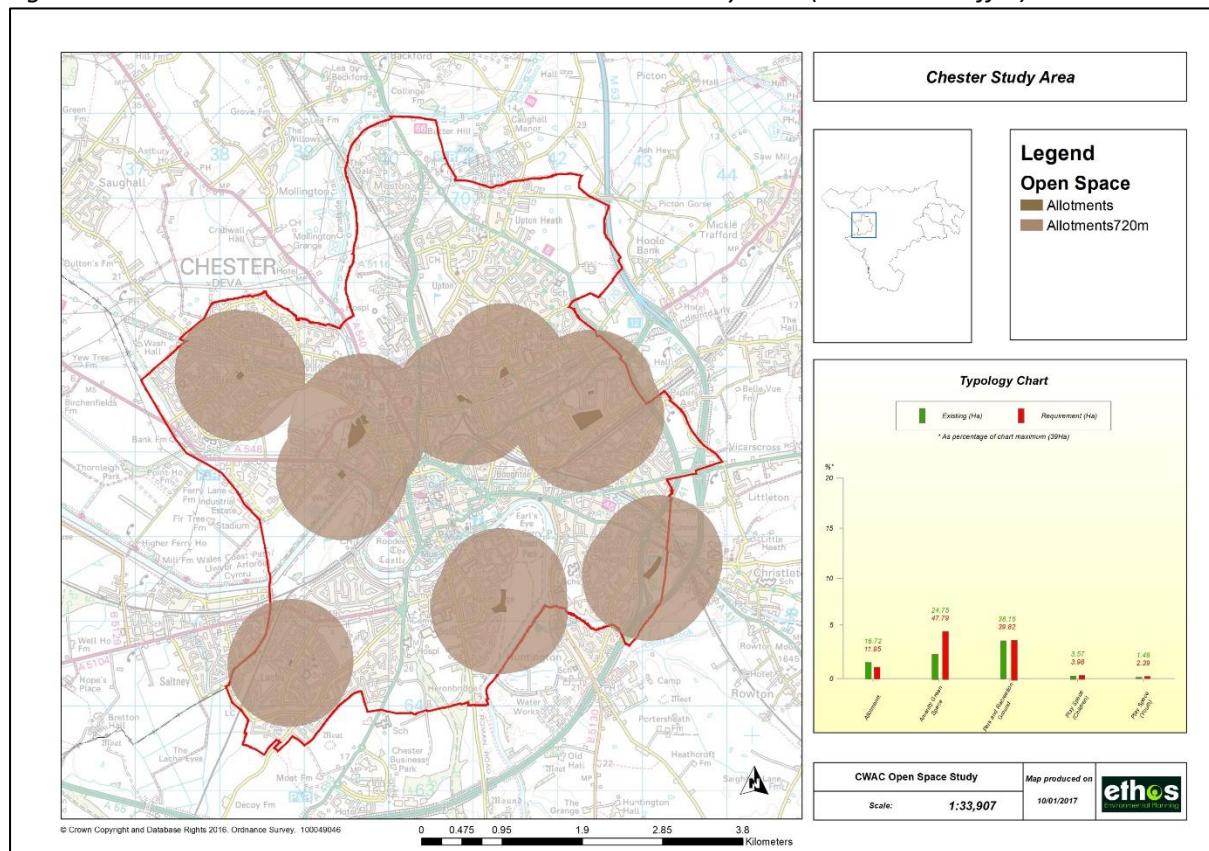


Figure 16 Access to Amenity Green Space across the Chester Study Area (480 metre buffer)

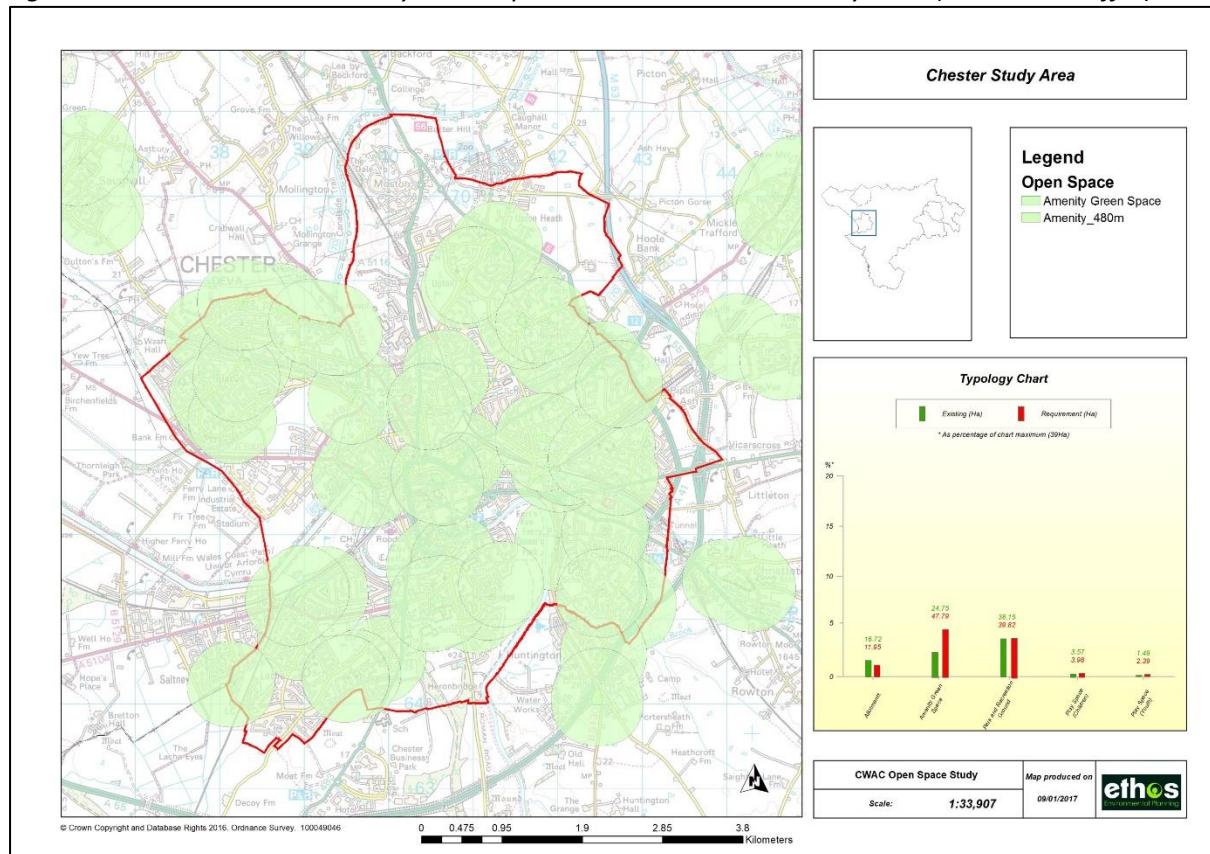


Figure 17 Access to Parks and Recreation Grounds across the Chester Study Area (720m buffer)

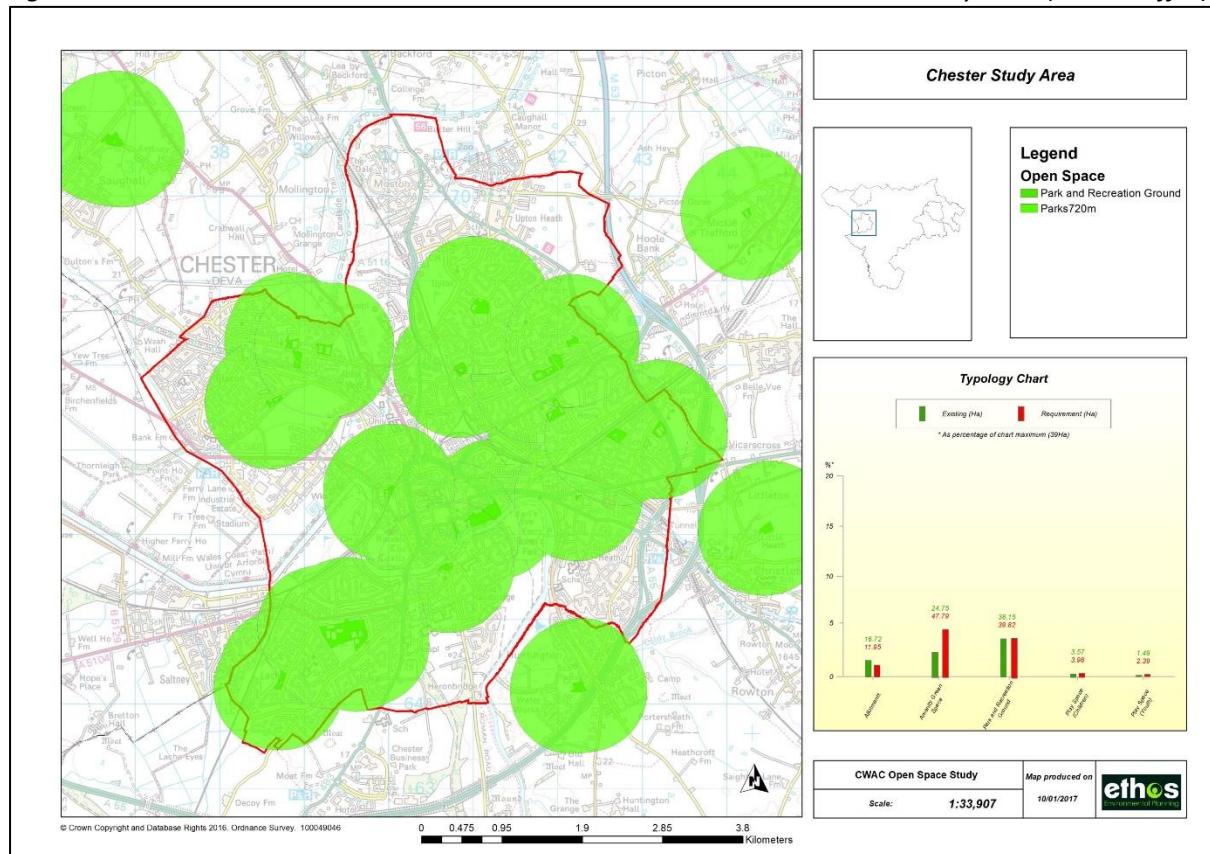


Figure 18 Access to Children's Play Space across the Chester Study Area (480 metre buffer)

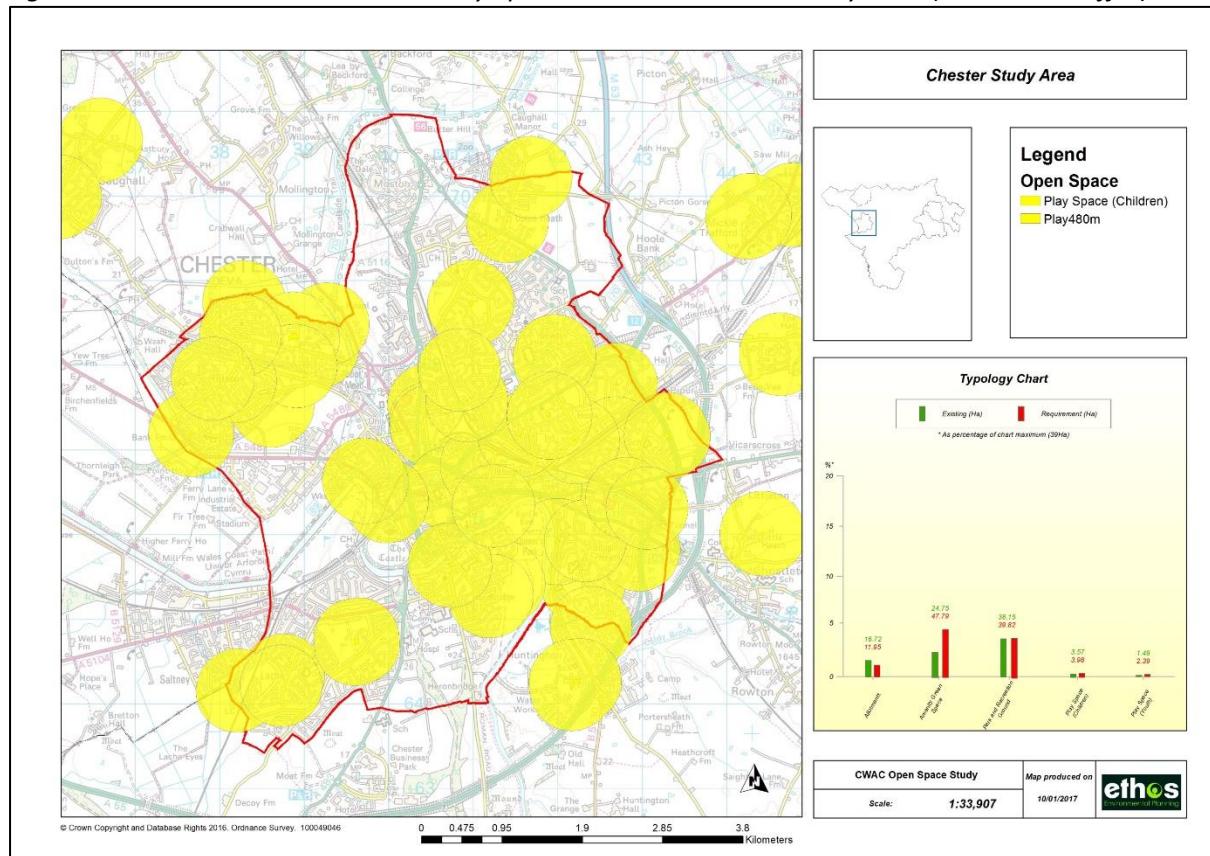


Figure 19 Access to Youth Play Space across the Chester Study Area (600 metre buffer)

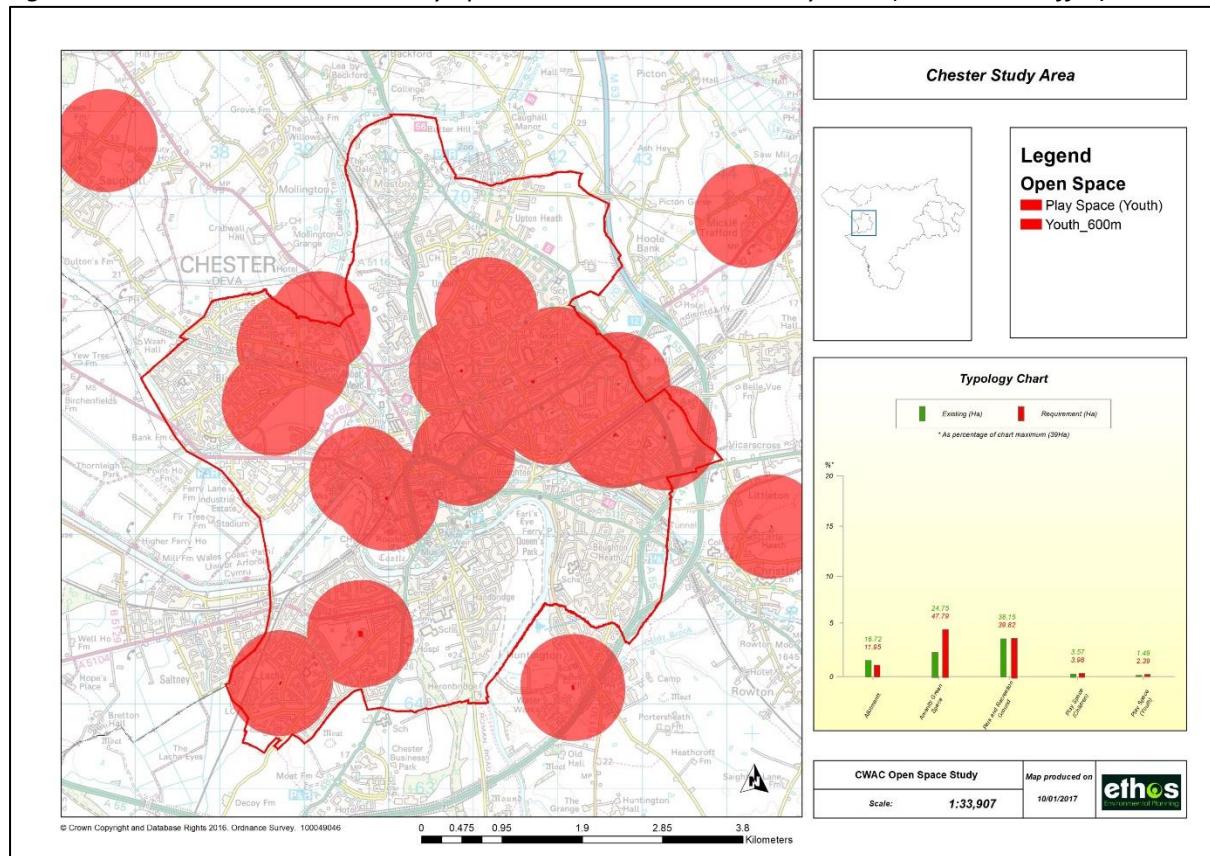


Figure 20 Access to Natural Green Space across the Chester Study Area (20ha+ sites within 2km)

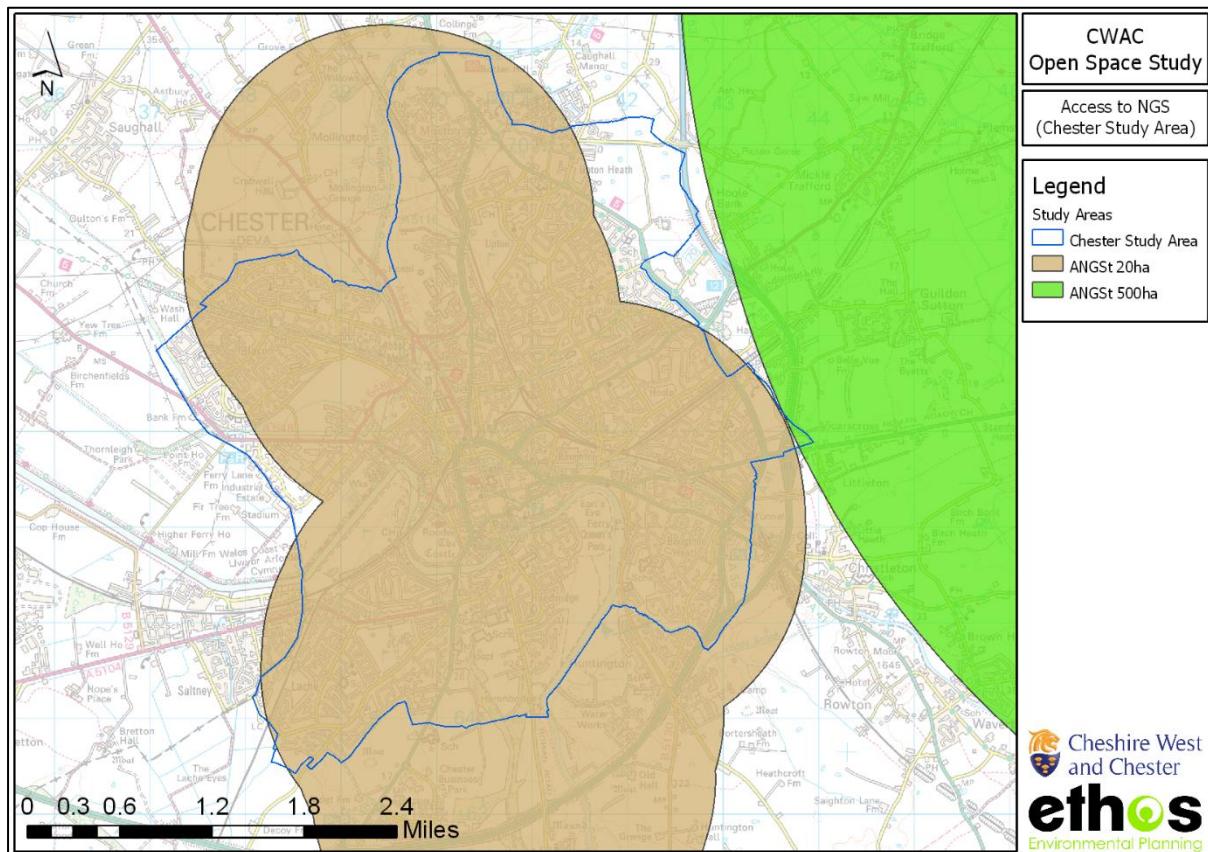
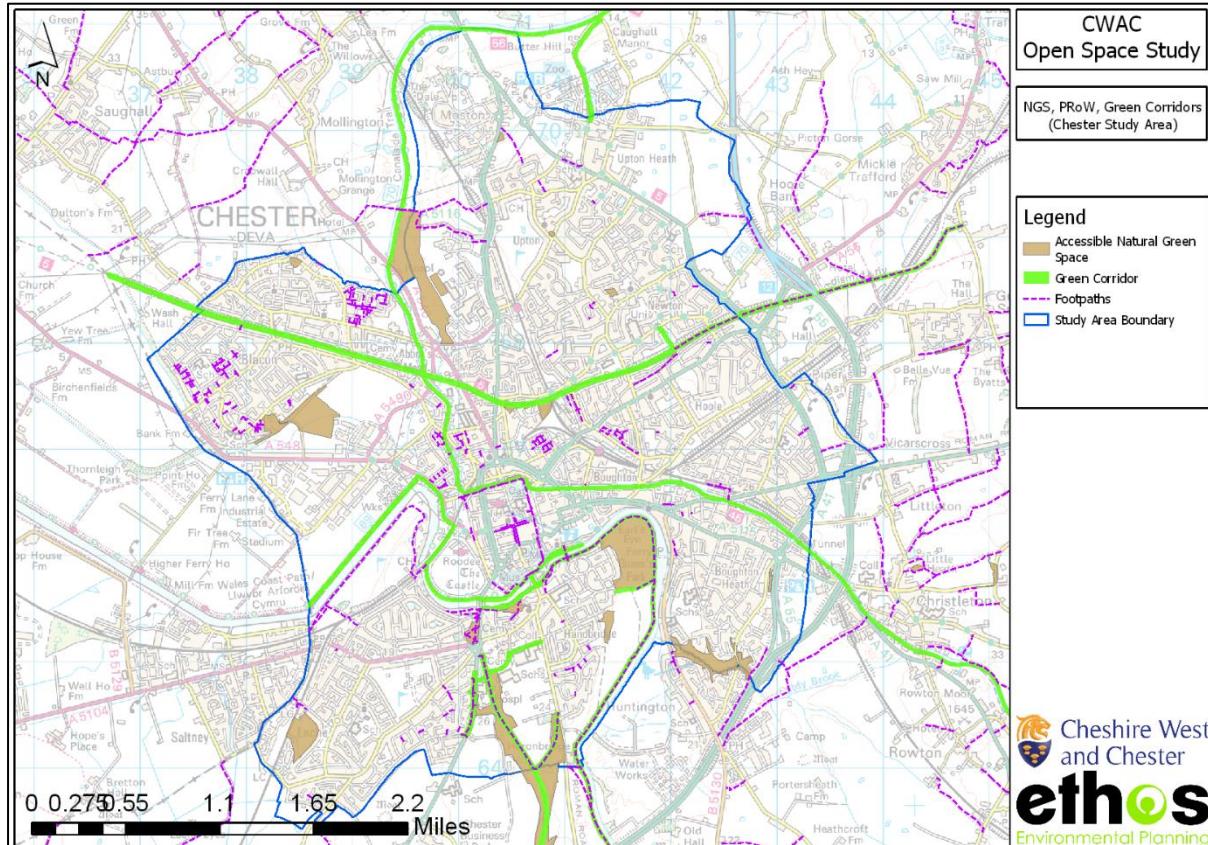


Figure 21 Public Rights of Way, green corridors and natural greenspace across the Chester Study Area



4.2 Analysis of existing access

Table 6 below summarises the access maps provided (figures 15-21), highlighting any gaps or access issues.

Table 6 Summary of existing access issues for Chester Study Area

Typology	Current Access
Allotments	No provision in Upton and gaps in the northern part of Newton, Chester City and Handbridge Park.
Amenity Green Space	Good access with only small gaps in the south of Lache.
Parks and Recreation Grounds	Access good across most of the study area with most wards having access to several facilities. There are however gaps in access e.g. in Great Boughton and Blacon.
Play Space (Children)	Good access throughout most of Chester City with small gaps in Upton, Blacon and Handbridge Park.
Play Space (Youth)	Good access around Newton and Hoole, however there are gaps in access in a number of wards including Handbridge park, Great Boughton, Upton and Blacon.
Natural Green Space	Meets the standard for access to sites 20ha + across the majority of the study area. There is no access to 100ha or 500ha natural green space across the study area.
Natural Greenspace, green corridors and Rights of Way	Limited ROW in the urban area, with provision largely restricted to the fringes and Handbridge Park and Chester City. Good connectivity to natural green space and to the wider area via green corridors, although connectivity to some natural green spaces could be improved.

5.0 Quality Assessment

5.1 Introduction

This section provides a summary of the quality audit that was undertaken as part of the overall study. Following the initial mapping exercise, site visits were undertaken to assess the quality of sites. It was not possible to survey all sites due to access restrictions, namely certain private sports grounds and education sites. Other sites were also excluded due to limitations of resources, these included small amenity green spaces (<0.15 ha in size), and churchyards and cemeteries.

The audits were undertaken using a standardised methodology and consistent approach. However, audits of this nature can only ever be a snap-shot in time and their main purpose is to provide a consistent and objective assessment of a sites existing and potential quality rather than a full asset audit.

5.2 Audit methodology

Sites were visited and a photographic record made of key features, along with an assessment of the quality of the site. Quality was assessed using the following criteria which is based on the Green Flag Assessment¹:

- Access;
- Welcoming;
- Management and maintenance (hard and soft landscaping);
- Litter and dog fouling;
- Healthy, safe and secure;
- Community involvement;
- Biodiversity.

Existing quality score/rank

For each open space, an existing quality score rank from A – D has been given, where **sites that rank A are very good quality, and sites that rank D are very poor quality**. These rank scores have been calculated as follows:

- For each open space, a score for each of the above criteria is given between 1 and 5, where 1 is very poor and 5 is very good.
- The scores are totalled for each site and the following thresholds are used for assigning a rank:
 - A is 38 to 45
 - B is 28 to 37
 - C is 18 to 27
 - D is 9 to 17

¹ <http://www.greenflagaward.org.uk/awards/green-flag-award/>

- These thresholds are based on the lowest and highest possible score that a site can obtain.

Potential quality score/rank

For each open space, a ‘potential for improvement’ quality score rank from A-D has also been given, where **sites that rank A have the most potential to be improved, and sites that rank D have the least potential to be improved**. These potential rank scores have been calculated as follows:

- For each open space or play space, a ‘gap’ score for each of the above criteria is given between 0 and 4, where a gap of 0 means there is no/very low potential for improvement and a gap of 4 means there is very high potential for improvement. For example, for the ‘Welcoming’ criteria, if a park and recreation ground has attractive, well maintained entrances with good signage it might score 4 (i.e. good) for existing quality and also 4 for potential quality (i.e. no gap score, and therefore no improvements needed). On the other hand, if there was no signage or old/worn signage and the entrance had a broken gate and litter, it might score 1 for existing quality and 4 for potential (i.e. with a gap score of 3), so those sites with the highest ‘gap score’ between the existing quality and potential quality have the highest potential for improvement.
- The ‘gap’ scores are totalled for each site and the following thresholds are used for assigning a rank:
 - A is 15-36
 - B is 10-14
 - C is 5-9
 - D is 0-4

This system highlights where sites could be improved. **Sites that have been given a rank of D for potential may still have potential to be improved, and local aspirations and information should be taken into account** in addition to the quality audit (which can only provide a snapshot in time).

The details of the quality audit are held within the quality database (appendix 2). Within these area profiles, a summary of the existing quality score ranks and those sites with the most potential for improvement (i.e. those sites with a potential quality rank of A, B, or C) is included within section 5.3.

5.3 Summary of priority open space sites

The 'gap' between the existing and potential quality scores has been used to identify and prioritise sites for improvement as explained above i.e. sites with the highest gap scores have the highest potential for improvement.

The following maps provide a summary of the existing quality rank (figure 22) and sites with the most potential for improvement i.e. those that rank A, B or C for potential (figure 23). These draw on the detailed quality audit database provided in appendix 2.

Details on the quality of play space (child and youth provision) can be found in the emerging CWAC Play Strategy; the quality of playing pitches is covered within the CWAC Playing Pitch Strategy; and the quality of fixed sports facilities within the CWAC Built Facilities Strategy.

Figure 22 Existing quality rank of open space

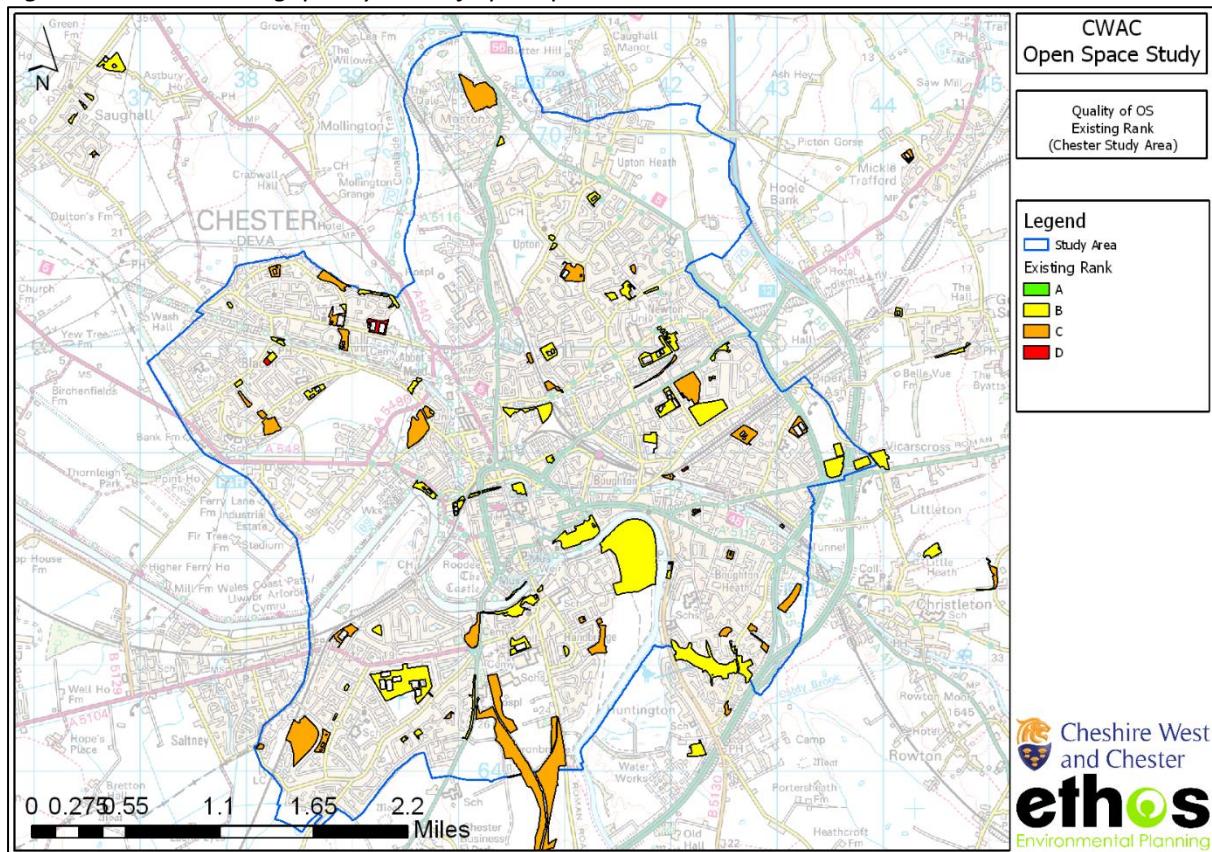
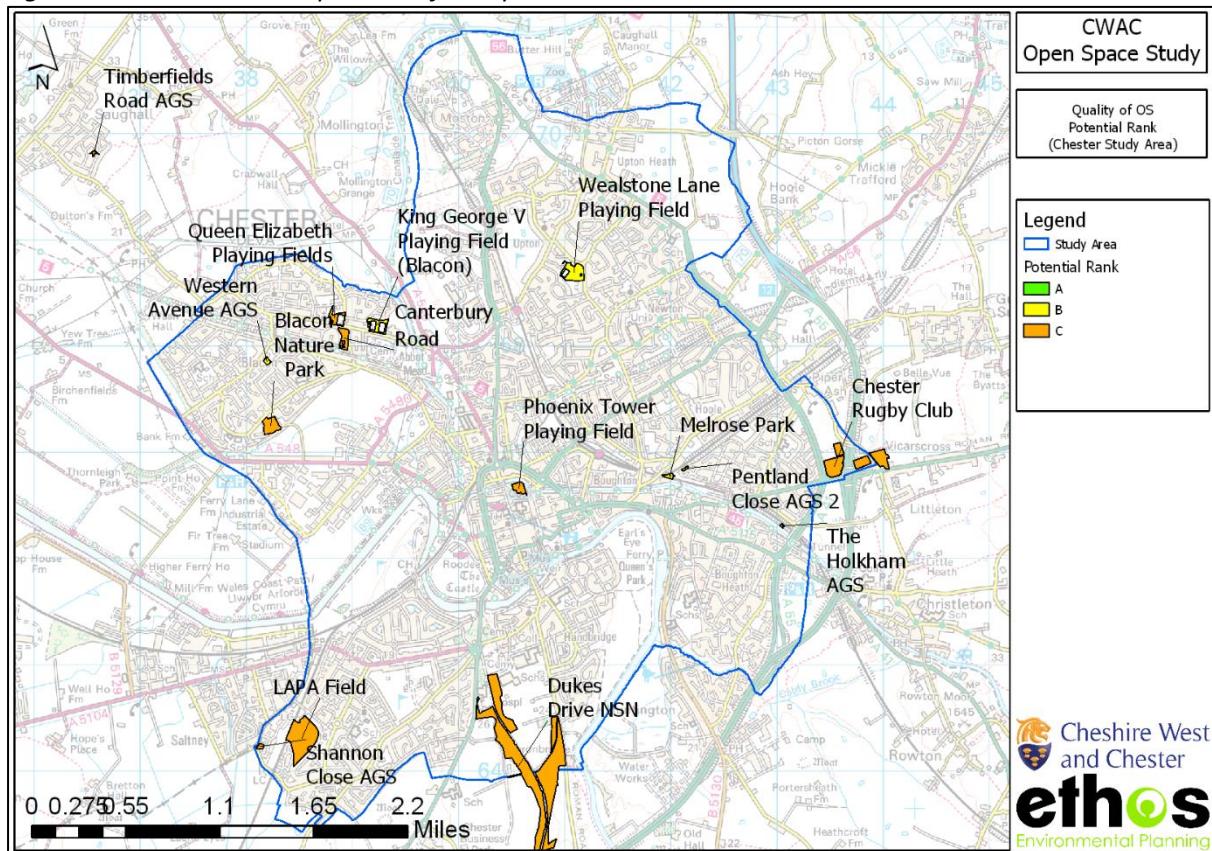


Figure 23 Sites with potential for improvement



6.0 Future need for Open Space

This section of the report considers the overall implications for open space provision from the predicted population growth for the whole of the study area by wards.

6.1 Projected housing growth

The Local Plan makes provision for at least 5,200 new dwellings to be delivered within Chester, in which in the region of 1,300 dwellings will be provided through Green Belt release. To meet this requirement the following land is identified: Wrexham Road is identified to be removed from the green Belt to facilitate the provision of around 1,300 new homes providing for a range of and mix of housing types including affordable housing in line with housing in line with policy 'SOC 1 Delivering affordable housing', together with essential community infrastructure including the provision of a new primary school.

For the purpose of this assessment, an increase in population of 11,960 people has been used (using the average household occupancy of 2.3 from the 2011 census).

6.2 Impact of housing growth on existing open space provision

Assuming a population increase of 11,960 people, the total population for the Chester area within the local plan period would increase to 91,605 people.

Using the CWAC standards for open space, the total amount of open space that would be required for an increase in 11,960 people is shown in table 7:

Table 7 Total amount of open space required for increased population growth of 11,960 people

Typology	Required standard for new provision	Requirement for 11,960 people (Hectares)
Allotments	0.15	1.79
Amenity Green Space/Natural Green Space	1.0	11.96
Park and Recreation Ground	0.5	5.98
Play Space (Children)	0.05	0.60
Play Space (Youth)	0.03	0.36
Total		20.69

Noting that the area has an under supply across all typologies (with the exception of allotments), the existing shortfalls in provision would be exacerbated by a population increase if no new open space was to be provided. Therefore, the need for on-site provision of open space across all typologies (with the exception of allotments) through new development in Chester is a key priority.

Although there would be sufficient supply of allotments following the projected population growth for the area (and therefore the priority would be to improve the quality of and access

to existing allotments), there may still be a requirement for new on-site provision in line with the quantity standard if this would remove/reduce gaps in access.

7.0 Summary of priorities for the area

This section brings together the analysis of the existing quality, access and quantity of open space and considers future requirements for open space from population growth, and considers the following priorities:

- Existing provision to be enhanced;
- Opportunities for re-location/re-designation of open space;
- Identification of areas for new provision;
- Facilities that may be surplus to requirement.

7.1 Existing provision to be enhanced

Section 5.3 provides a summary of the existing quality ranks drawn from the quality audit (appendix 2). Figure 23 then highlights those sites which have 'potential for improvement' i.e. are ranked A, B or C. Those sites ranked D, generally have very little potential for improvement. The audit has identified a total of 14 sites which are ranked A-C, with sites ranked A the highest potential/priority for improvement.

7.2 Opportunities for re-location/re-designation of open space

Opportunities to relocate or re-designate open spaces draws on both the quantity and access analysis. In the case of Chester, there is little opportunity in terms of quantity, as there is an existing shortfall across all typologies with the exception of allotments. In terms of access, there is limited opportunity due to the quantitative issues, however, the following could be considered:

- The overlap in access to amenity green space in Handbridge Park Ward where there is sufficient supply of amenity green space could provide potential for incorporating an area of alternative use e.g. Vernay Green may have potential to accommodate children's play equipment, reducing the shortfall in supply and access to this typology;
- The access analysis and quality audit indicate that a number of amenity green spaces and parks and recreation grounds may provide potential to meet gaps in youth provision, e.g. Edgars' Park in Handbridge Park Ward;
- The good quantity and access to natural green space in the south of the study area could provide potential for meeting shortfalls in certain provision. For example, the provision of natural play facilities at The Dingle could fill the gap in children's play provision in Handbridge Park Ward.

7.3 Identification of areas for new provision

The assessment has identified that there is already an existing quantitative shortfall in the provision of all types of open space (except allotments) in the Chester study area. The impact of future housing growth has also been shown to exacerbate this situation. Therefore, the need to provide open space on site in new development (with the exception of allotments) is

a key priority for the area. Provision of allotments may also be required on-site where this reduces gaps in access.

7.4 Facilities that may be surplus to requirement

Due to the existing quantitative shortfall in the provision of open space across all types of open space (except allotments which would result in gaps in access if any were to be lost), it is recommended that there are no open space facilities that are surplus to requirement.