

Cheshire West and Chester Open Space Study 2016 – 2030



**Cheshire West
and Chester**

Open Space Area Profile: Northwich

(Part 2 of 2)
(Final Version March 2017)



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

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Open Space Area Profile: Northwich

1.0 Introduction

The Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC) Open Space Study is presented in two parts. The first part 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. The second part of the study comprises five open space area profiles which provide more localised information.

The area profiles have been developed for five areas as shown in figures 1 and 2. These are based on the areas identified in the Local Plan (Chester, Ellesmere Port, Northwich, Winsford and rural area) 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)

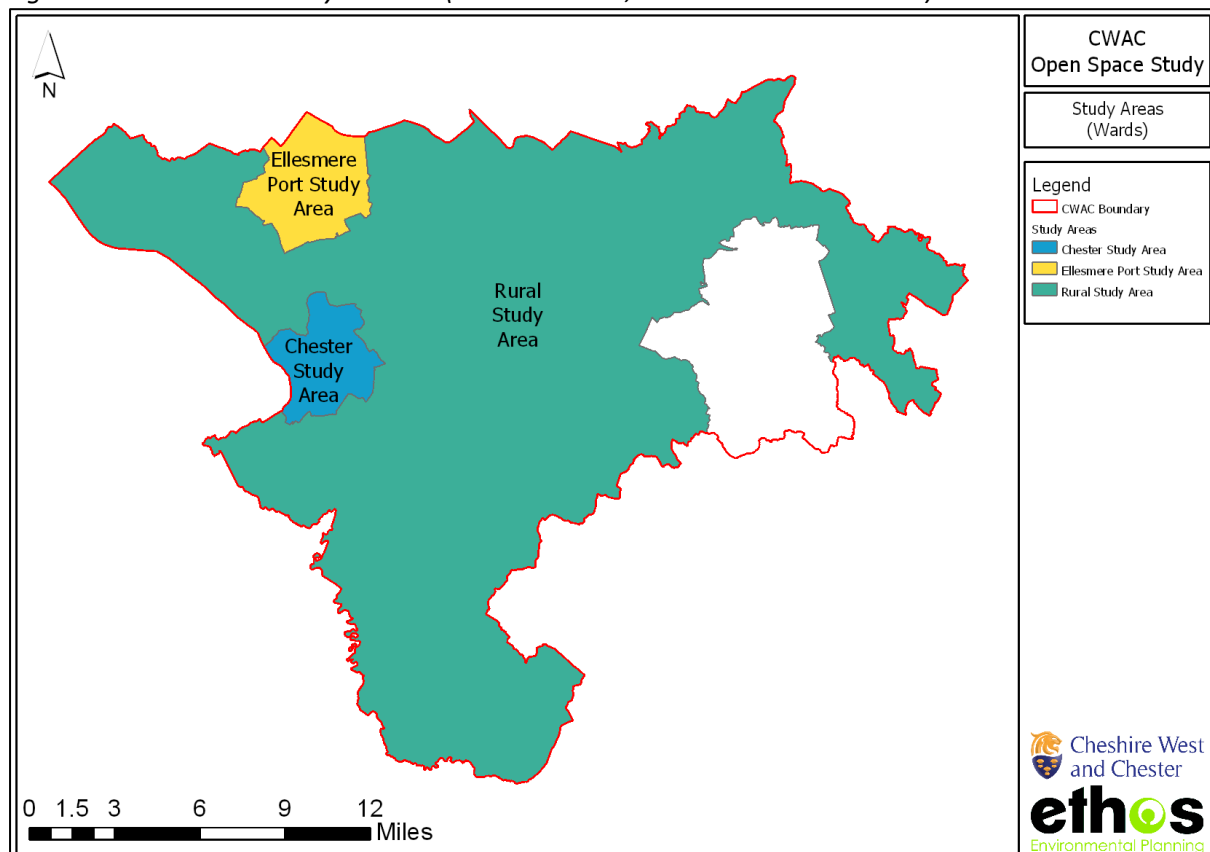
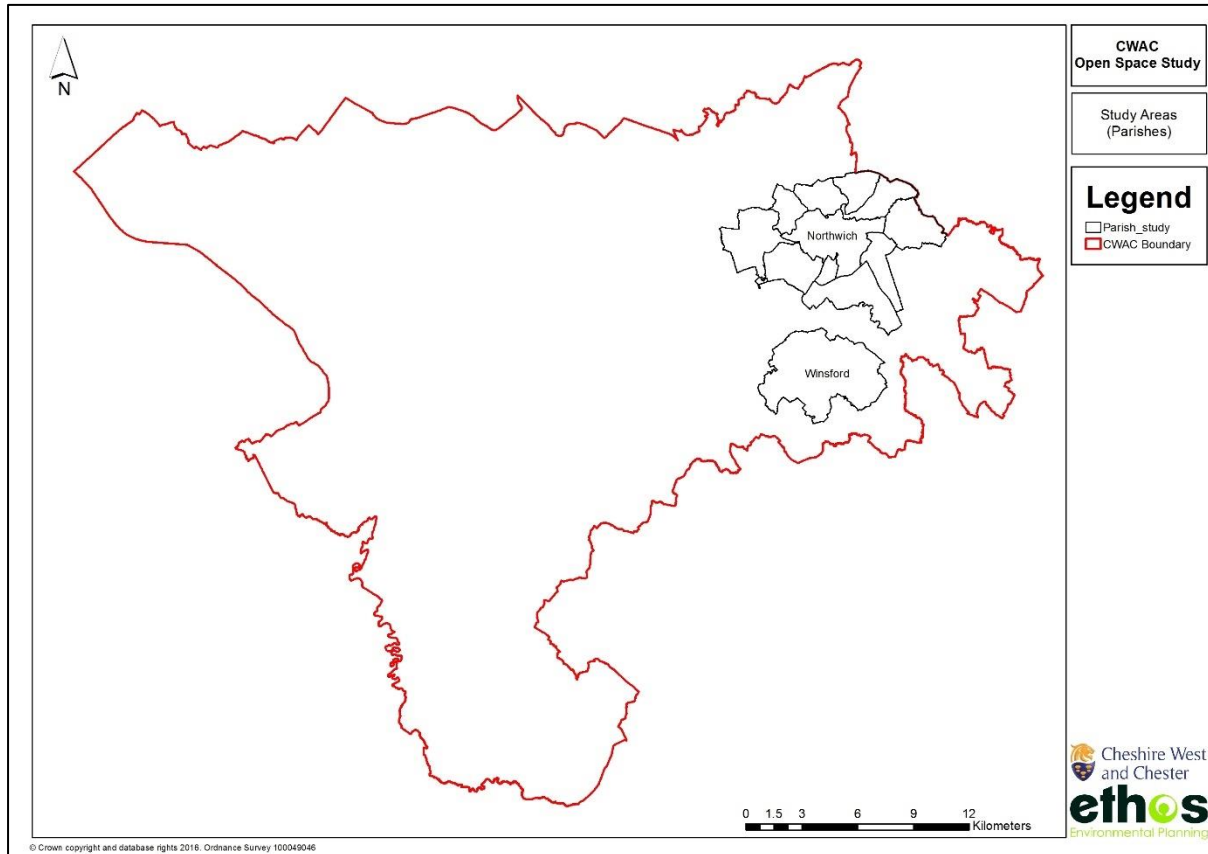


Figure 2 *Parish analysis Areas (Winsford and Northwich)*



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.

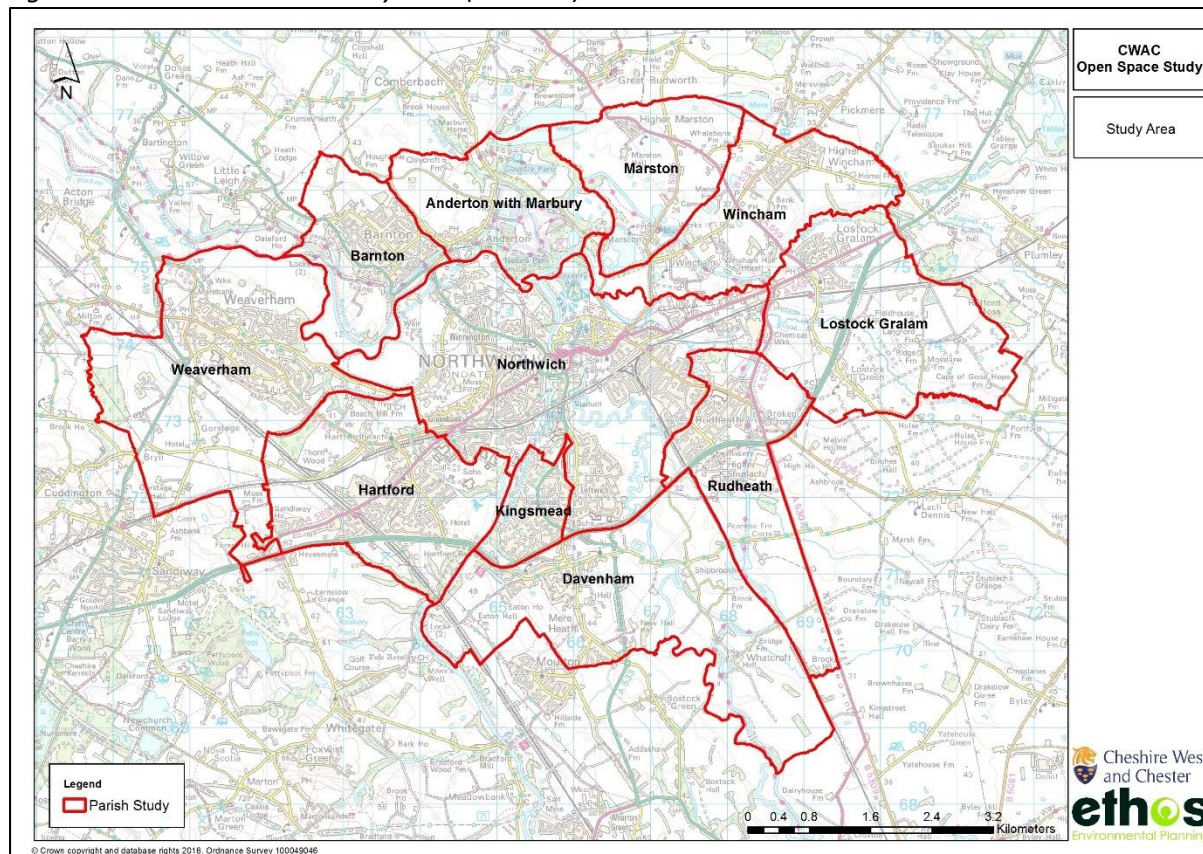
All of the maps provided within this section of the report are intended to be used for indicative purposes only. Larger scale maps have been provided as a separate database to the council.

1.1 Geographical Area

For this study area, Northwich Parish forms the core, with the surrounding parishes of Barnton, Weaverham, Hartford, Kingsmead, Wincham, Lostock Gralam, Davenham, Rudheath, Anderton with Marbury and Marston also included within this study area. It is

important to note that the analysis has used the parish boundaries from the 2011 census, and not the revised parish boundaries from 2015, which to date do not have reliable population statistics (this is further explained in part 1). It is the intention of CWaC Council to update the reports when new parish population statistics are made available.

Figure 3 *Northwich Study Area (Parishes)*



1.2 Population

Table 1 *Parish population statistics (Census, 2011)*

Name	Population
Weaverham	6,391
Barnton	5,614
Anderton with Marbury	571
Marston	538
Wincham	2,162
Hartford	5,558
Northwich	19,924
Lostock Gralam	2,298
Kingsmead	4,892
Rudheath	3,807
Davenham	2,745
Total	54,500

1.3 Northwich – Local Plan extract

The CWaC Local Plan provides a summary of Northwich:

“Northwich - The town of Northwich and adjoining settlements of Anderton, Barnton, Davenham, Hartford, Lostock Gralam, Lower Marston, Lower Wincham, Rudheath and Weaverham combine to form the third biggest urban area in Cheshire West and Chester. The area has benefited from the stabilisation of former salt mines that had prevented large areas of the town coming forward for redevelopment. In particular, land stabilisation has enabled proposals to come forward that will significantly improve the town centre of Northwich and help enhance the town's role as a major retail and leisure destination.

Northwich has good links to the wider countryside and significant heritage assets, including the distinctive black and white buildings of the town centre. The waterways of Northwich are a particular asset although parts of the town have flooding issues. The presence of chemical industries in the town has reduced, leaving a significant brownfield land resource. There are however, a high proportion of service sector jobs. Northwich has net out-commuting which reflects its central location to other urban areas and access to the mid-Cheshire railway line that serves Greater Manchester and Chester.”

In 1975 Marbury Country Park was the first area to be reclaimed from dereliction and has become a popular recreational area. In 1987 more land was reclaimed to form Furey Wood and over later years, Cheshire County Council's Land Regeneration Unit reclaimed what is now known as Anderton Nature Park, Witton Flash, Dairy House Meadows, Witton Mill Meadows, and Ashton's and Neumann's Flashes. The area now extends to approximately 800 acres (323 ha) of public space known as Northwich Community Woodland.

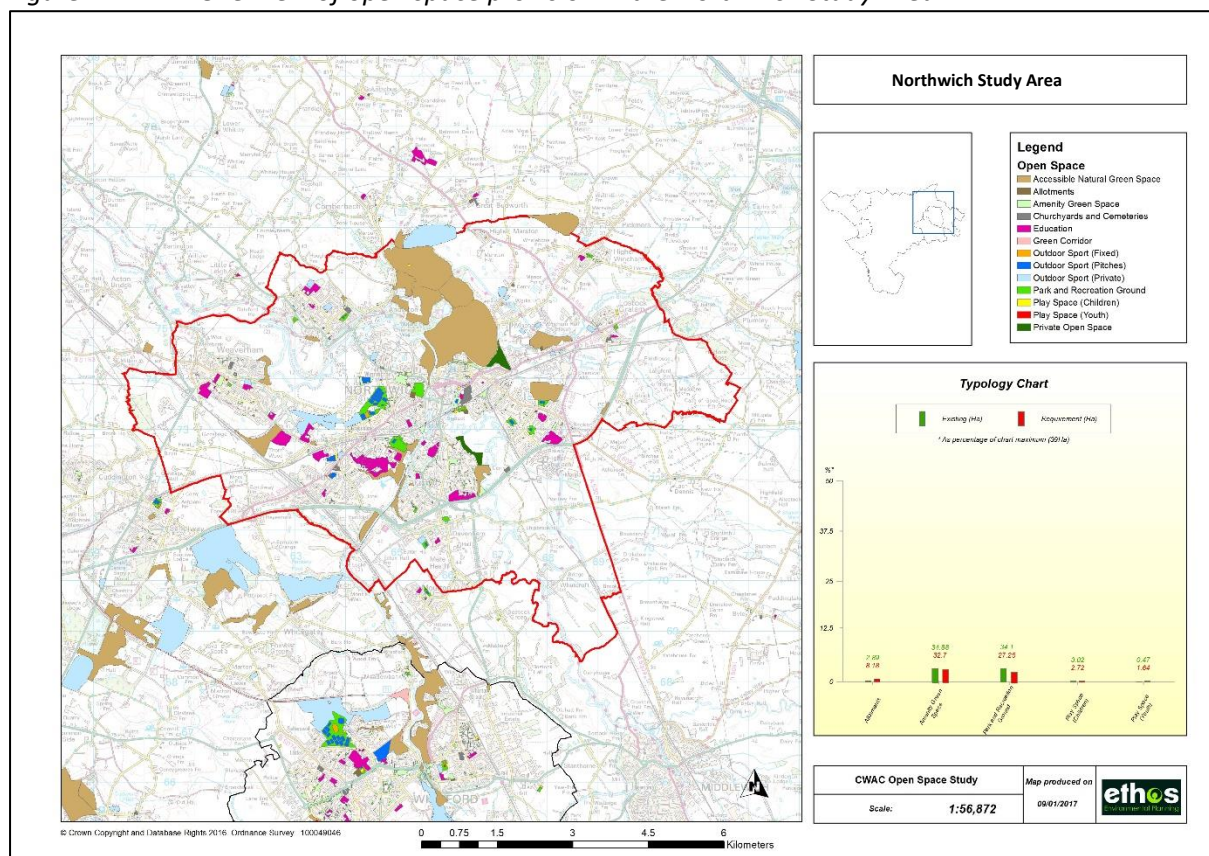
Northwich is currently undergoing an £80 million Development known as Barons Quay. The aim is to create a thriving retail and leisure quarter which see the creation of more than 300,000 square feet of shopping space, with a cinema, restaurants, cafés and parking for almost 1200 vehicles. As a result of this development it is predicted that over 1600 jobs will be created. Construction started in late 2014, with the first stage of the development due to open in Autumn 2016.

2.0 Existing provision of Open Space

This section provides maps showing existing open 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 parishes 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 and at A3 scale.

2.1 Overview of open space provision in the Northwich Study Area

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



2.2 Provision of open space in the Northwich Parishes

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

Figure 5 Provision of green space in Northwich

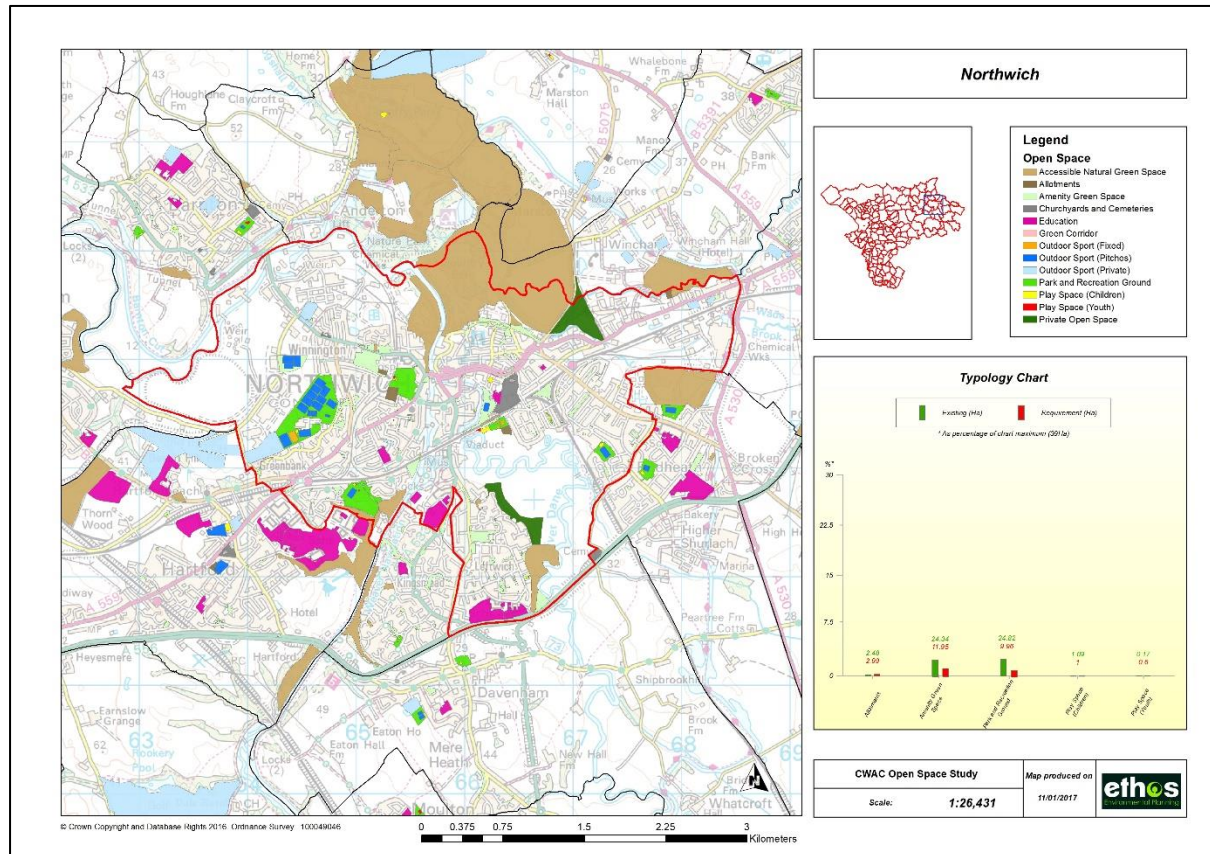


Figure 6 Provision of green space in Barnton

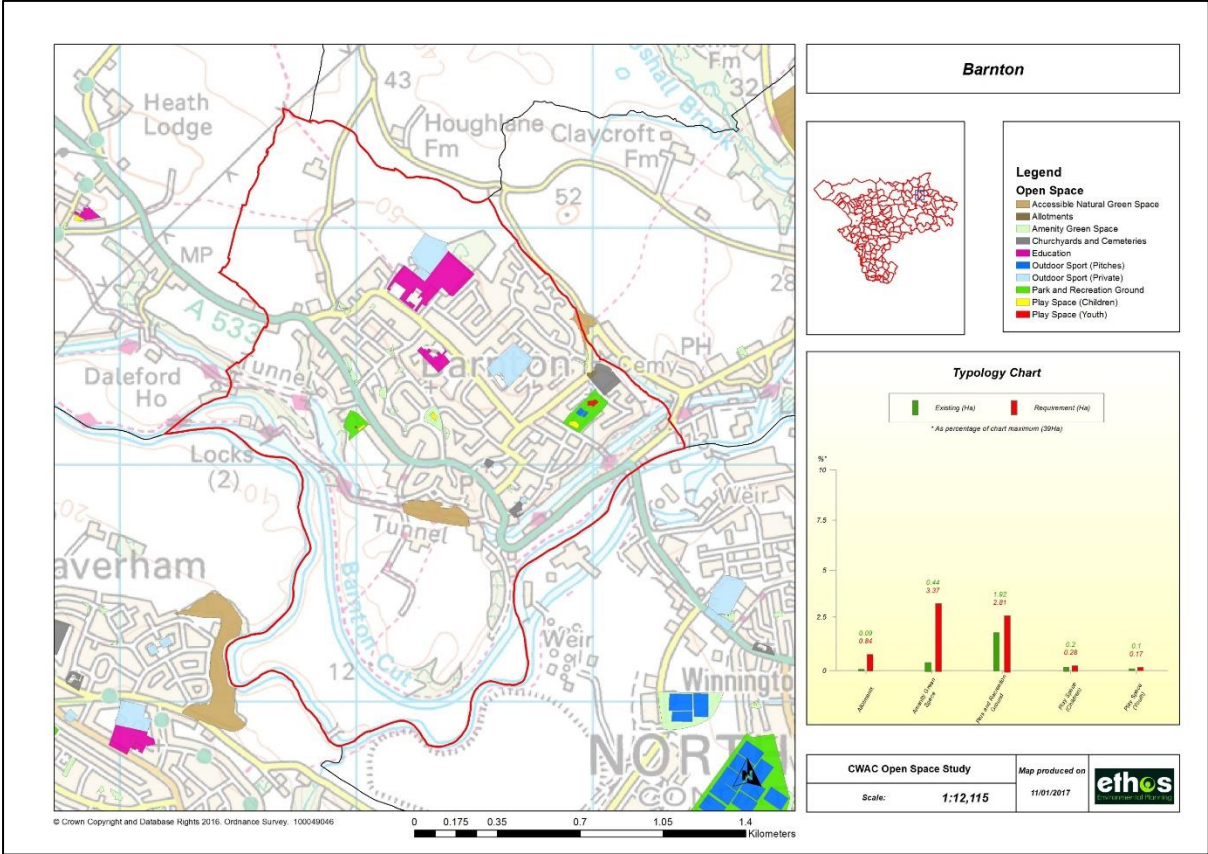


Figure 7 Provision of green space in Weaverham

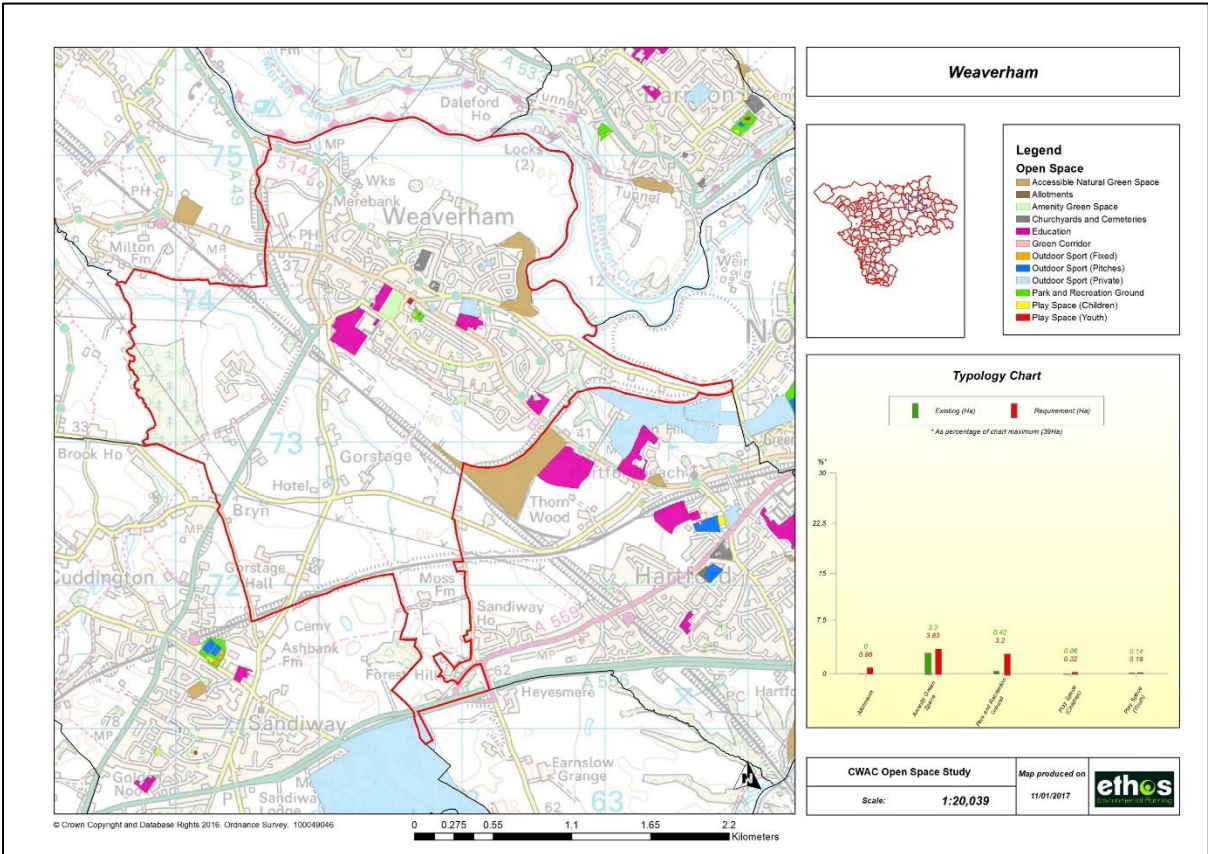


Figure 8 Provision of green space in Hartford

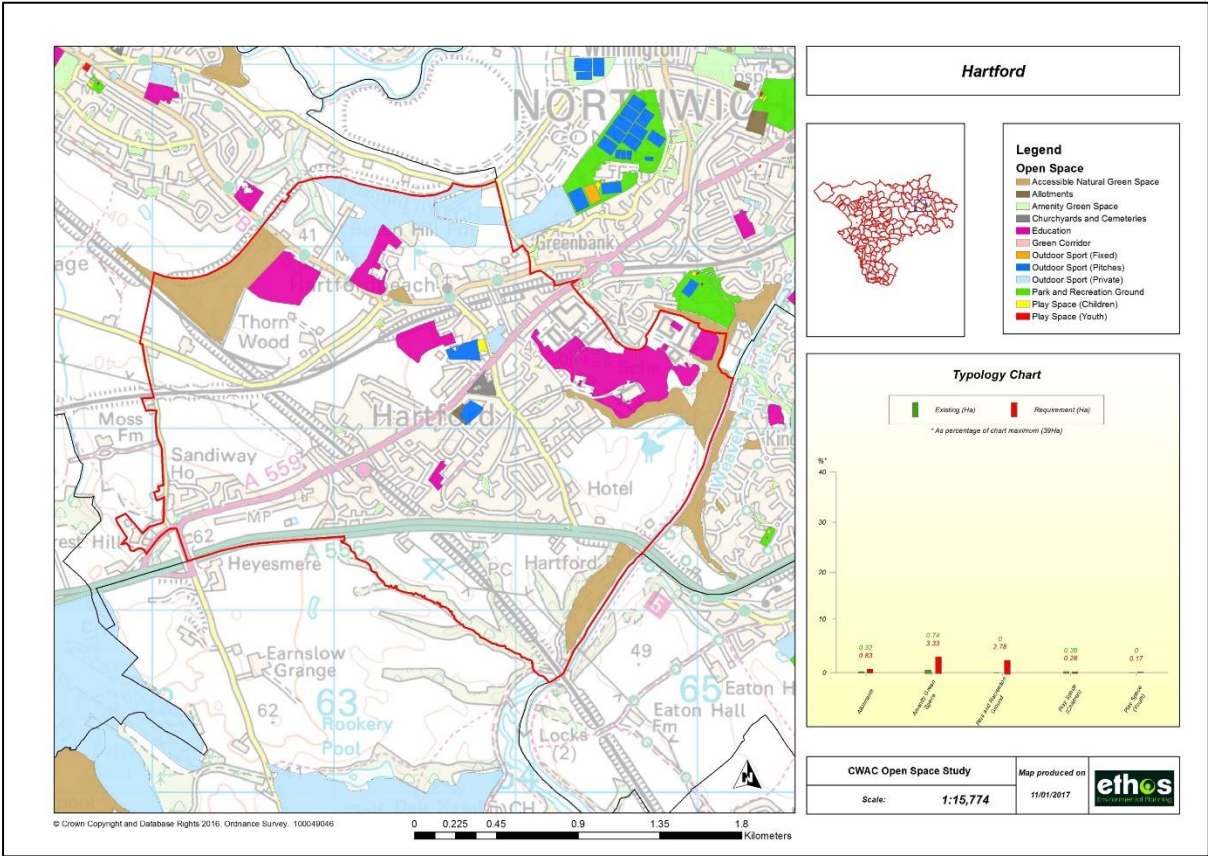


Figure 9 Provision of green space in Kingsmead

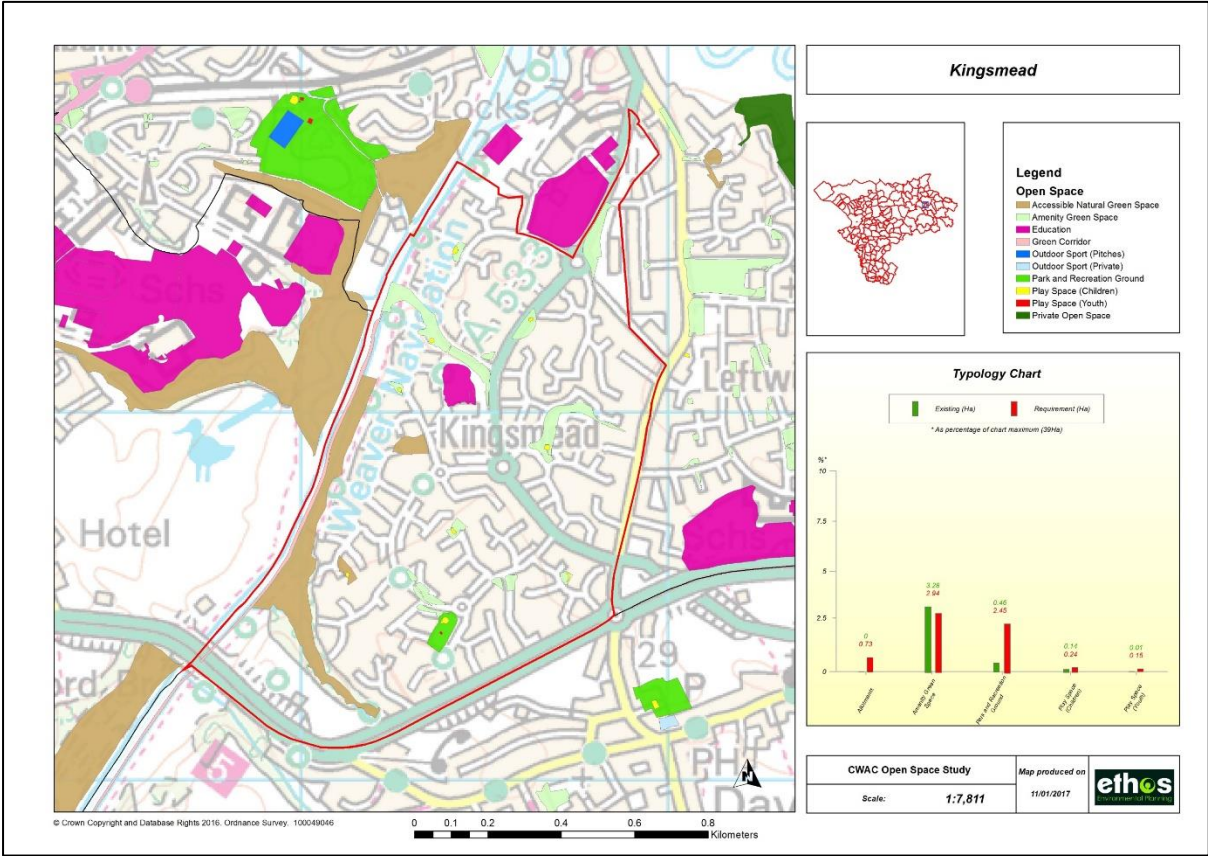


Figure 10 Provision of green space in Wincham

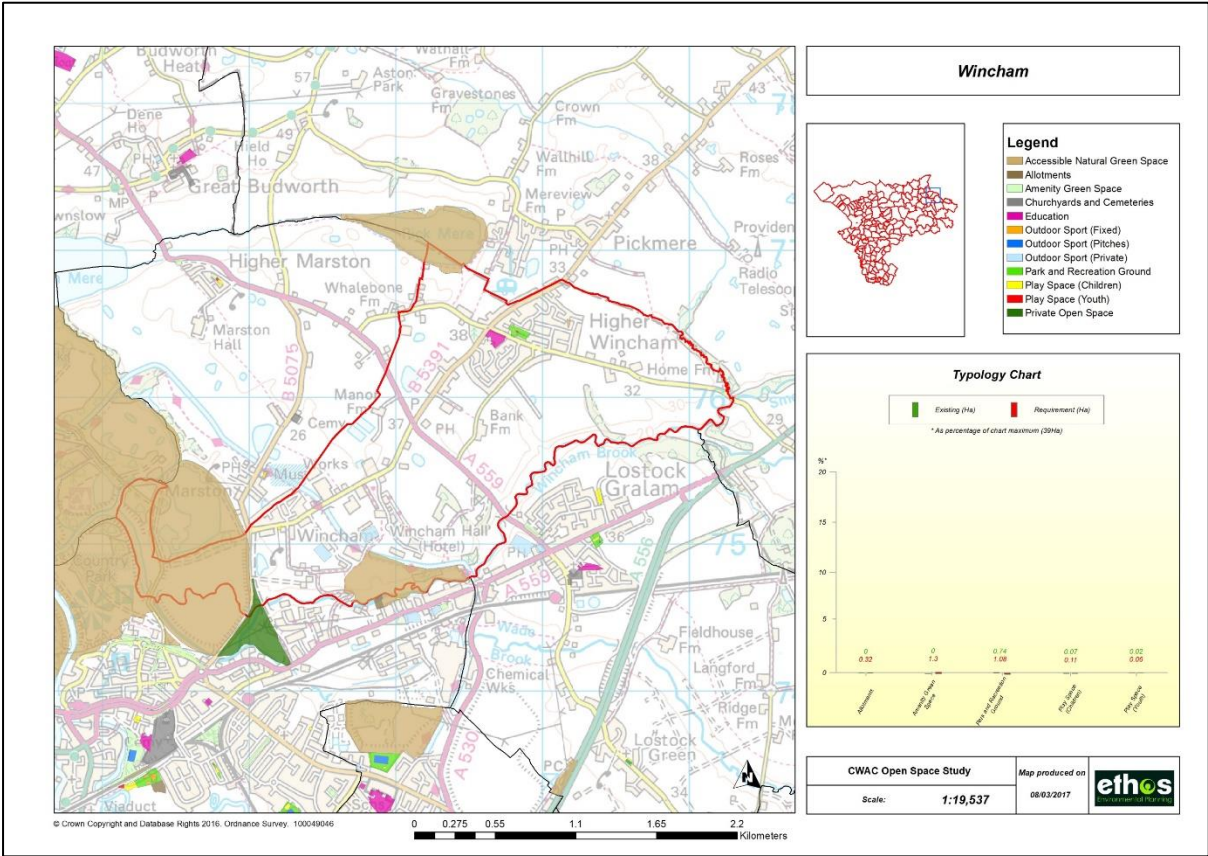


Figure 11 Provision of green space in Lostock Gralam

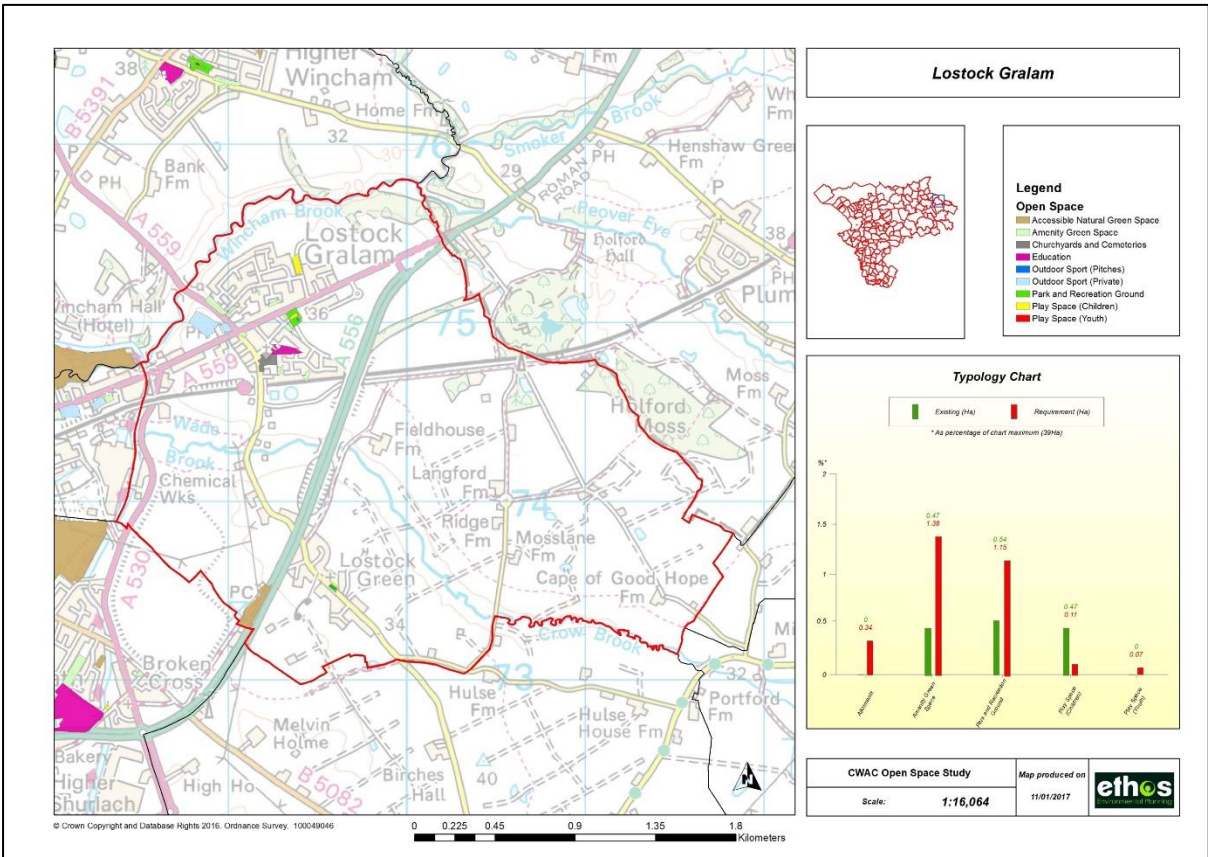


Figure 12 Provision of green space in Davenham

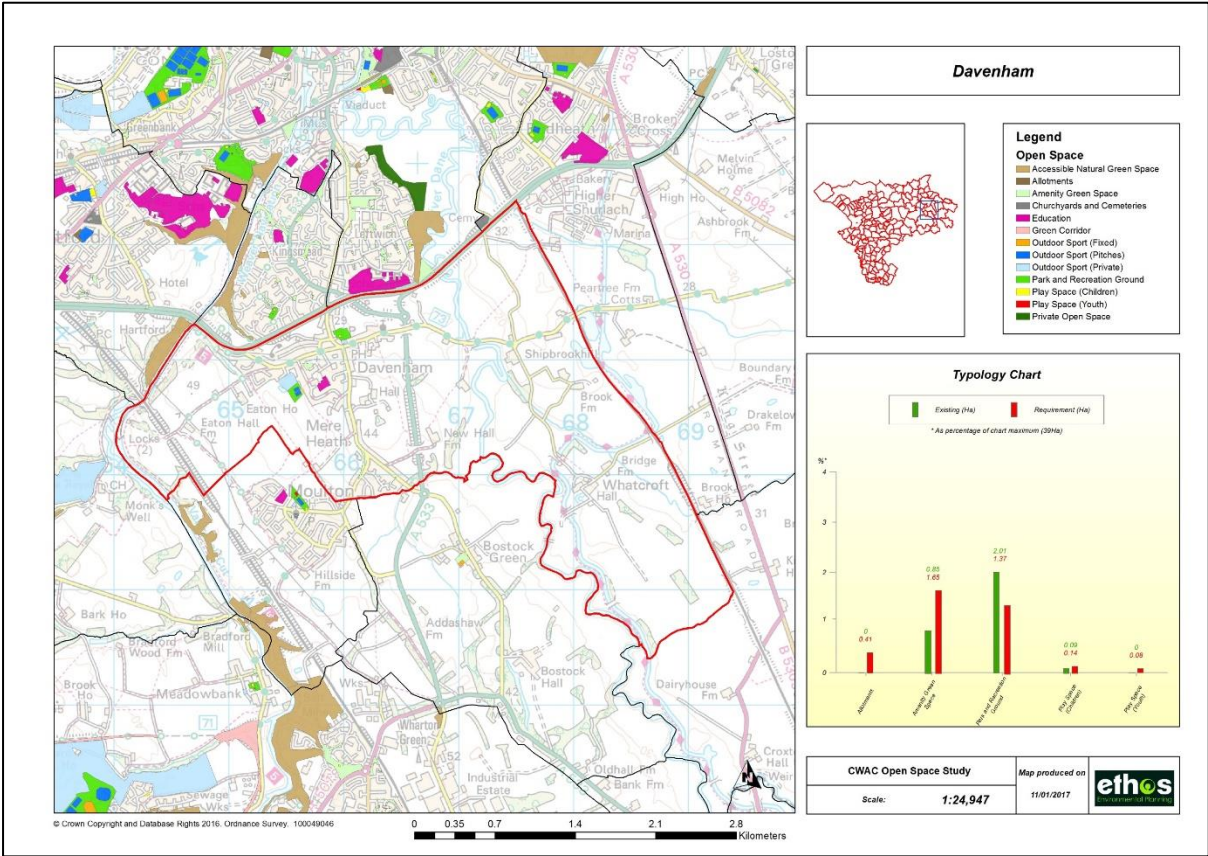


Figure 13 Provision of green space in Rudheath

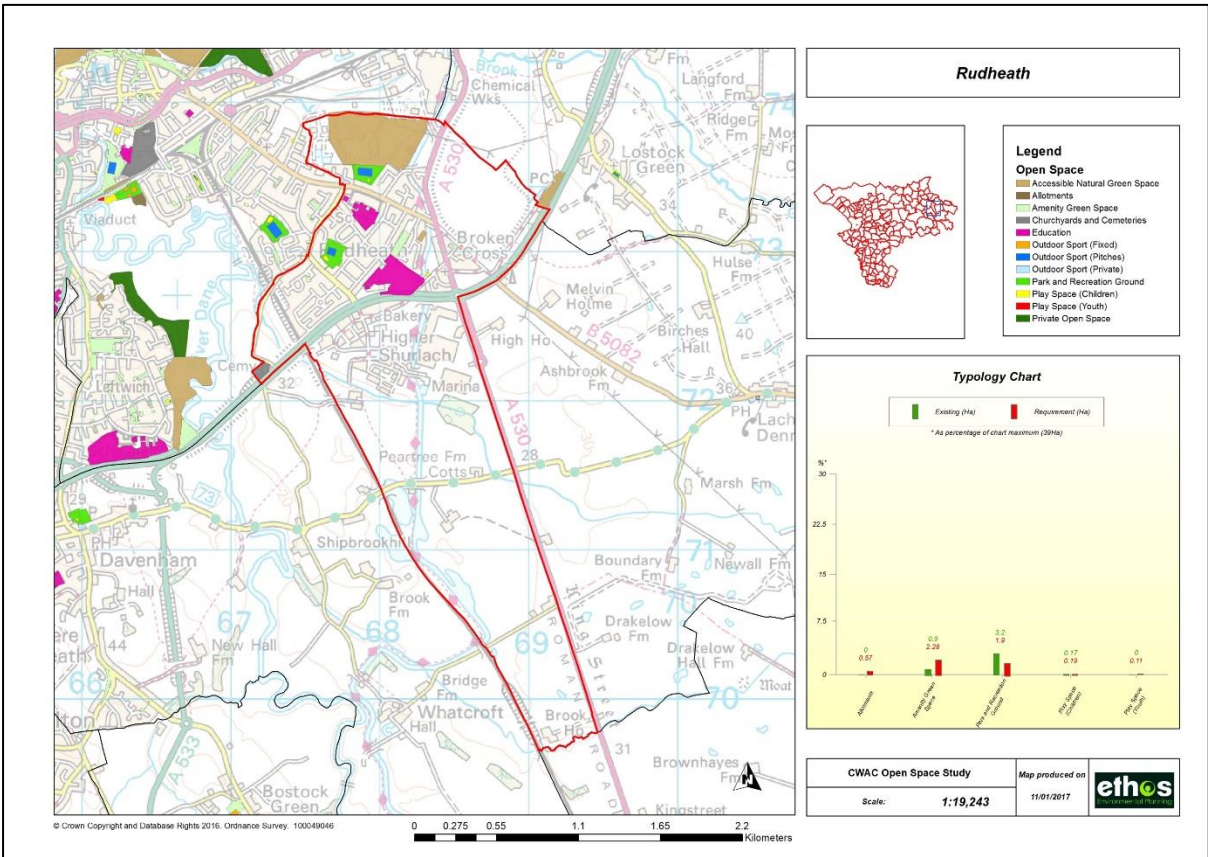


Figure 14 Provision of green space in Anderton with Marbury

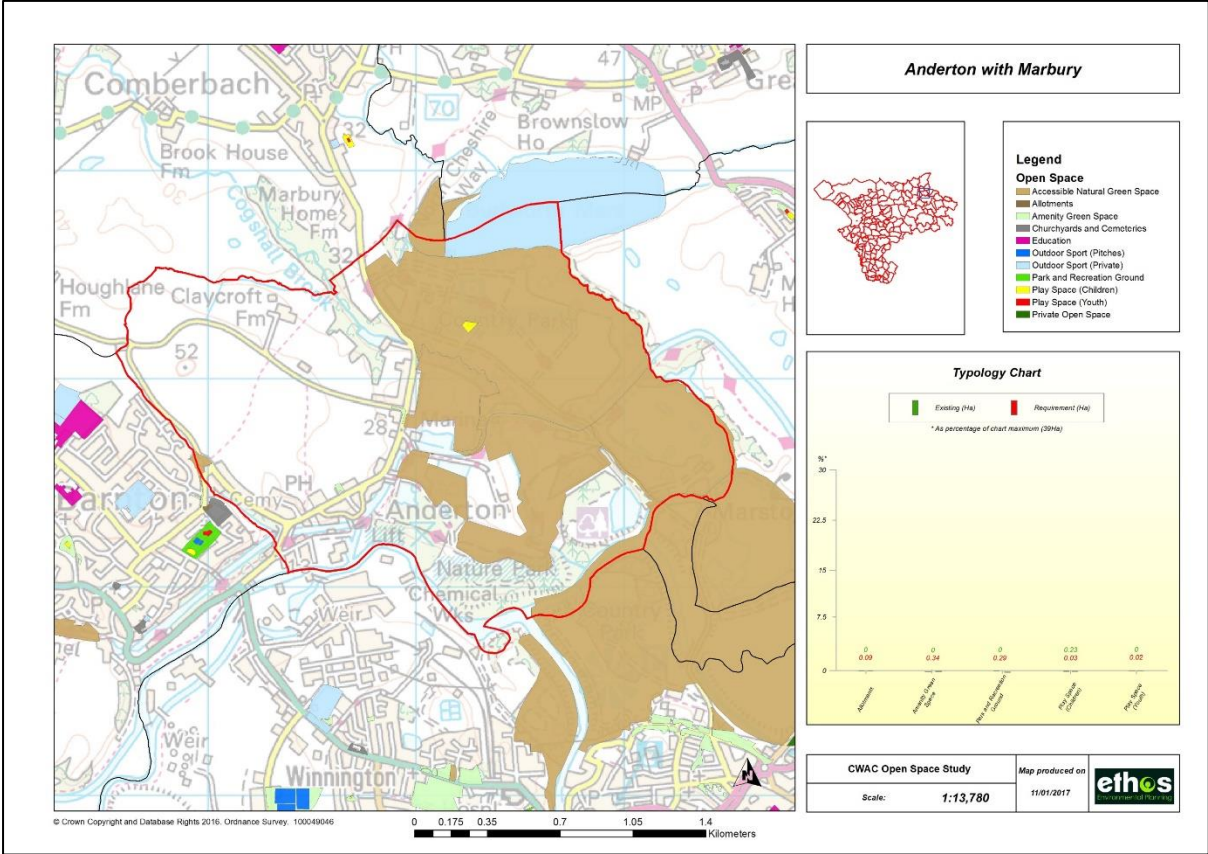
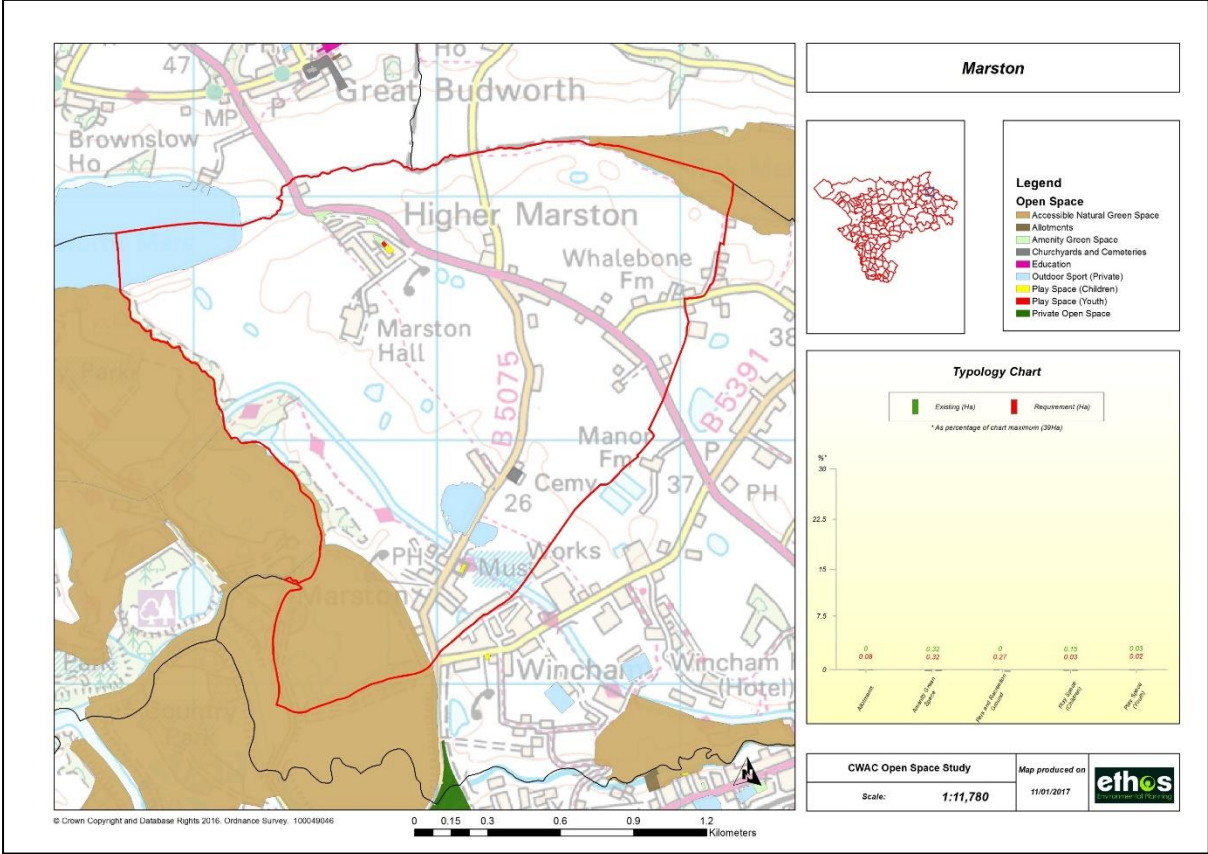


Figure 15 Provision of green space in Marston



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 study area. It uses the quantity standards for green space detailed in part 1 of the report, and summarised in table 2.

Table 2 Summary of quantity standards of open space

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	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
Green Corridors	None, but sites mapped	None
Private open spaces (e.g. paid access sites)	None, but sites mapped	None
Playing Pitches	None, but sites mapped. Further details provided in playing pitch strategy	
Fixed Outdoor Sport Facilities	None, but sites mapped. Further details provided in facilities strategy	
'Other' (Includes golf courses and fishing lakes)	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 green space within the study area against the CWaC standards:

- Table 3: Quantity provision in the Northwich Study Area;
- Table 4: Quantity provision in each of the individual Parishes in the Northwich Parish Study Area.

In some areas, open spaces may cross parish boundaries and as such the quantity provision is included within both of those parish totals (this is particularly the case for Natural Green Space). Therefore, if individual parishes 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 Supply of open space across the Northwich 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	2.89	0.05	8.18	0.15	-5.28	-0.1	UNDER SUPPLY
Amenity Green Space	35.12	0.64	32.7	0.6	2.42	0.04	SUFFICIENT SUPPLY
Park and Recreation Ground	34.1	0.63	27.25	0.5	6.85	0.13	SUFFICIENT SUPPLY
Play Space (Children)	3.02	0.06	2.72	0.05	0.29	0.01	SUFFICIENT SUPPLY
Play Space (Youth)	0.47	0.01	1.64	0.03	-1.16	-0.02	UNDER SUPPLY
Natural Green Space	460.4	8.45	0	0	460.4	7.7	N/A

Typology	Existing Provision (Ha)	Existing Provision (Ha/1000)	Required Provision (Ha)	Required Provision (Ha/1000)	Supply (Ha)	Supply (Ha/1000)	Overall Supply
Education	74.15	1.36	0	0	74.15	1.36	N/A
Churchyards and Cemeteries	10.41	0.19	0	0	10.41	0.19	N/A

Table 4: Supply in each of the individual Parishes in the Northwich Study Area

PARISH	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Park and Recreation Ground	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)
Anderton with Marbury	-0.09	-0.34	-0.29	0.2	-0.02
Barnton	-0.75	-2.93	-0.89	-0.08	-0.07
Davenham	-0.41	-0.8	0.64	-0.05	-0.08
Hartford	-0.51	-2.59	-2.78	0.08	-0.17
Kingsmead	-0.73	0.34	-1.99	-0.1	-0.14
Lostock Gralam	-0.34	-0.91	-0.61	0.36	-0.07
Marston	-0.08	0	-0.27	0.12	0.01
Northwich	-0.51	12.39	14.86	0.09	-0.43
Rudheath	-0.57	-1.38	1.3	-0.02	-0.11
Weaverham	-0.96	-0.63	-2.78	-0.26	-0.05
Wincham	-0.32	-0.95	-0.34	-0.04	-0.04

Table 3 shows that within the Northwich Parish Study Area there is an under supply of allotments and play space (youth). The total shortfall for each typology is:

- Allotments 5.28 Ha
- Play Space (Youth) 1.16 Ha

Total shortfall 6.44 Ha

Table 4 shows how this provision varies within individual parishes in the study area, which indicates that provision does vary across parishes and typologies, with some meeting the standards and others falling below.

4.0 Analysis of existing access to Open Space

4.1 Existing access to open space across the Parish Study Area

This section provides maps showing access to different types of open space across the parish study area using the CWaC access standards (as summarised in table 5). More detailed maps showing access in each parish 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 16 Access to Allotments across the Northwich Study Area (720 metre buffer)

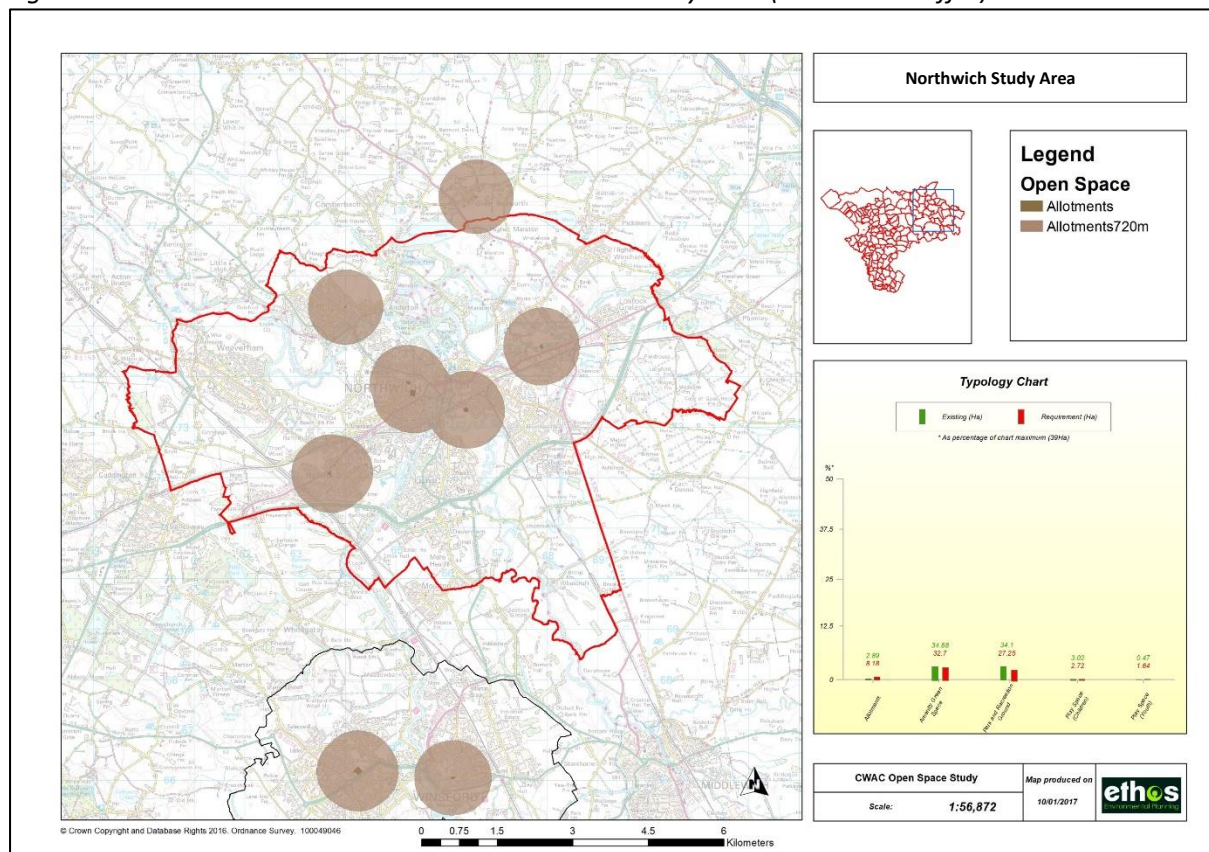


Figure 17 Access to Amenity Green Space across the Northwich Study Area (480 metre buffer)

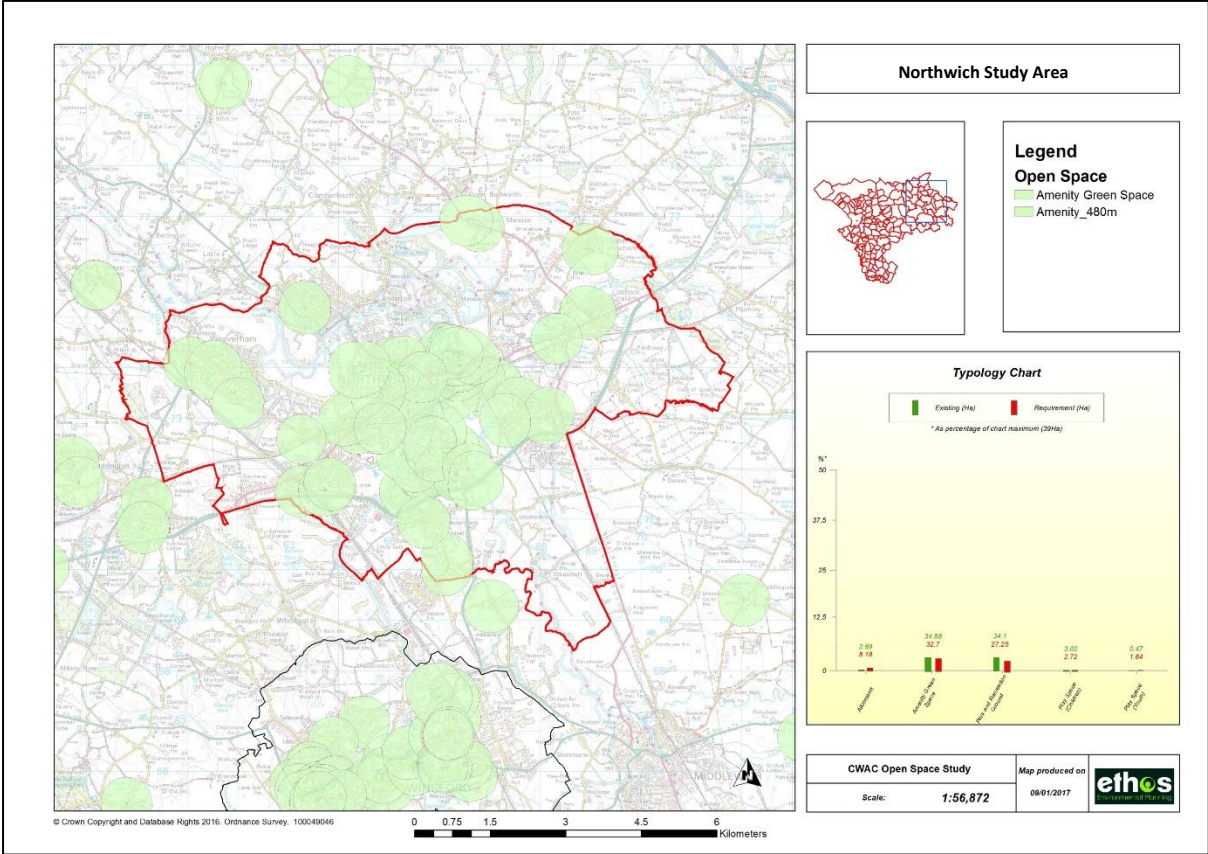


Figure 18 Access to Parks and Recreation Grounds across the Northwich Study Area (720m buffer)

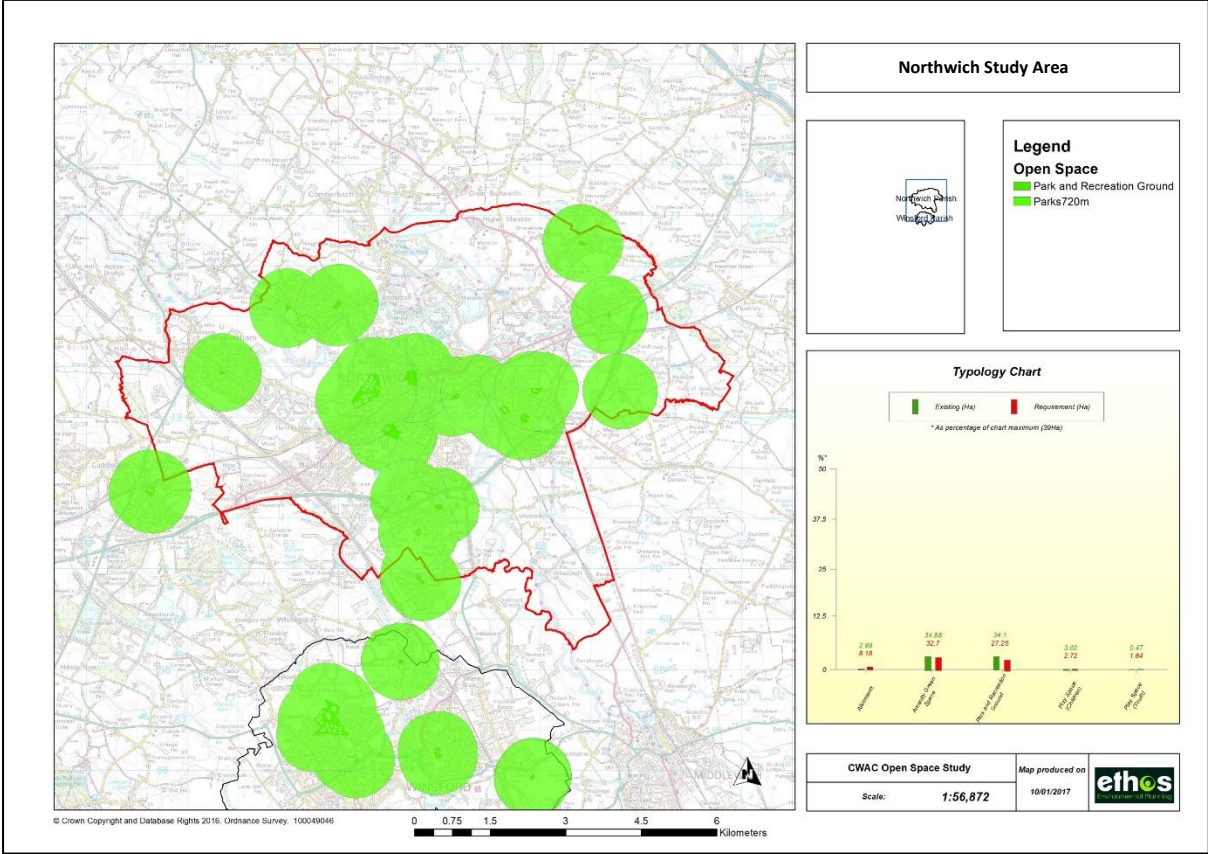


Figure 19 Access to Children's Play Space across the Northwich Study Area (480 metre buffer)

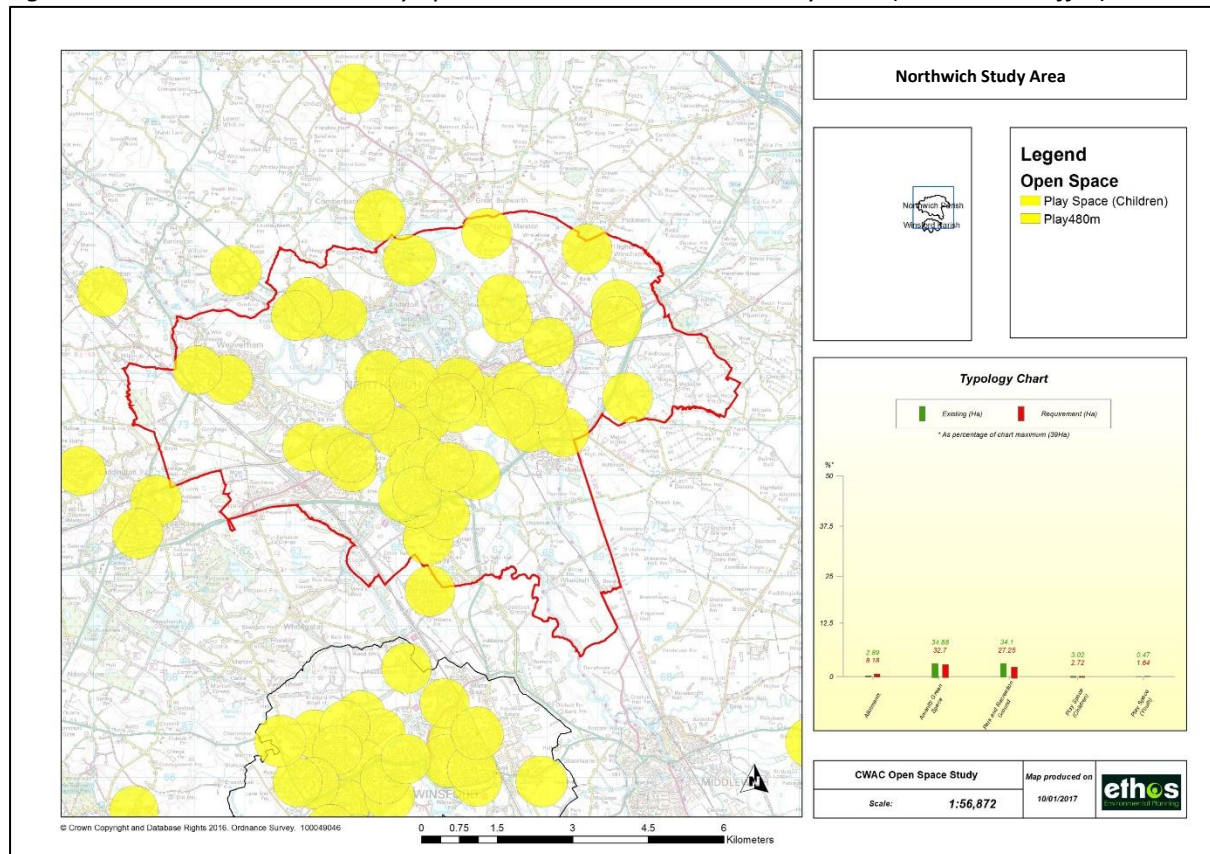


Figure 20 Access to Youth Play Space across the Northwich Study Area (600 metre buffer)

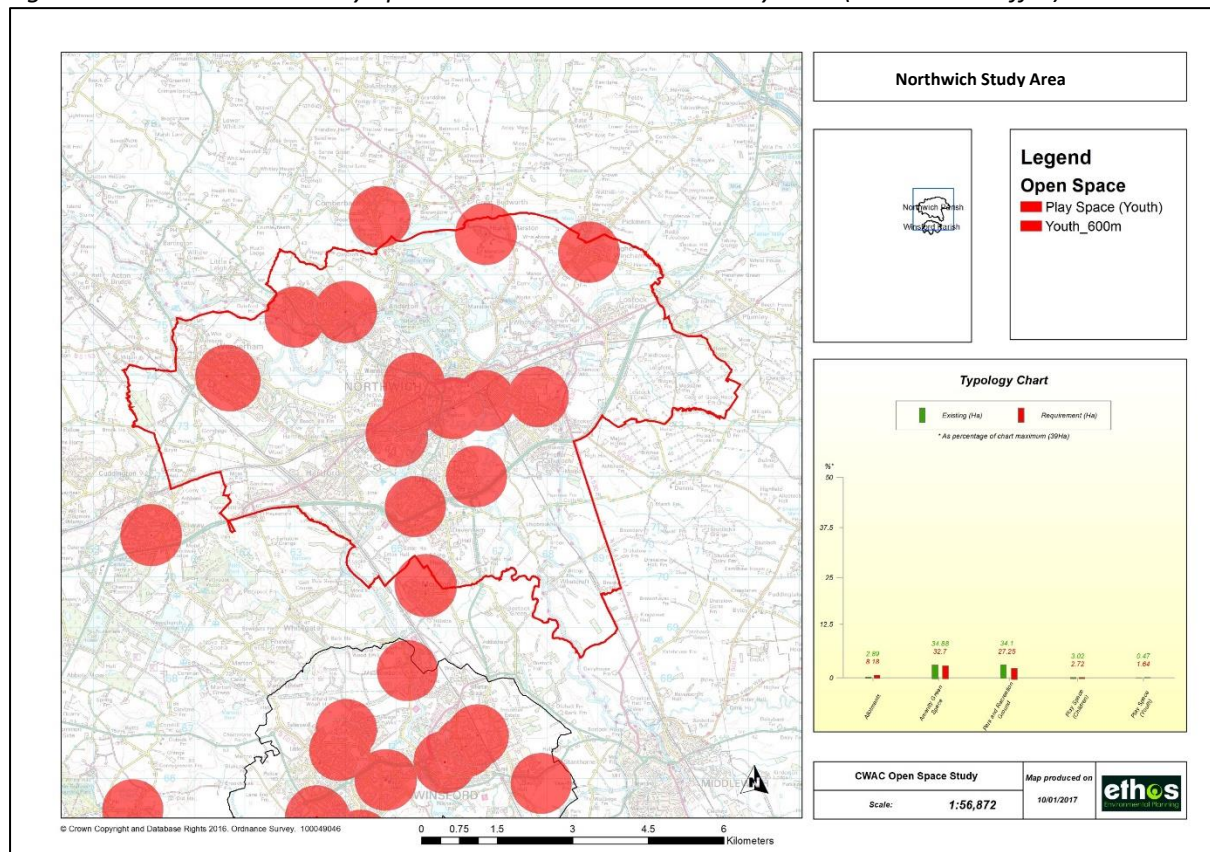


Figure 21 Access to Natural Green Space across the Northwich Study Area

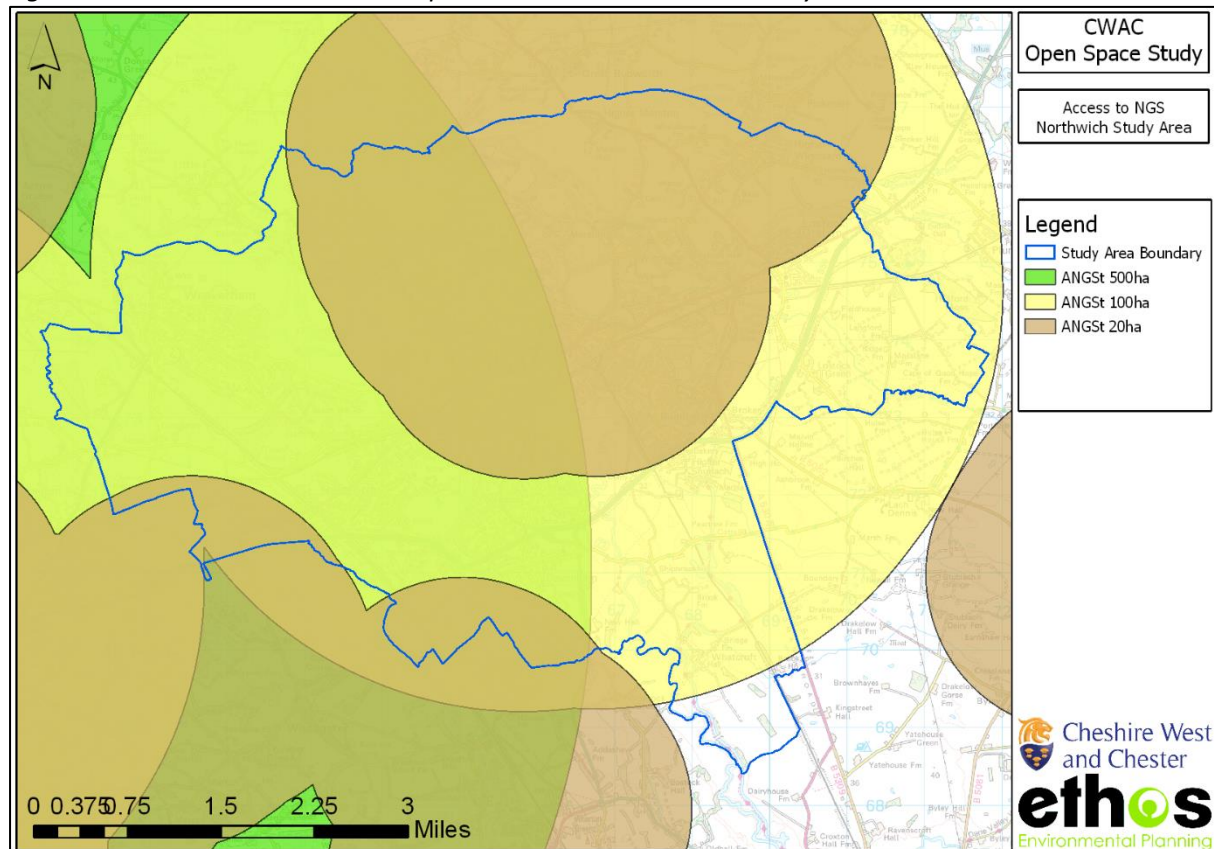
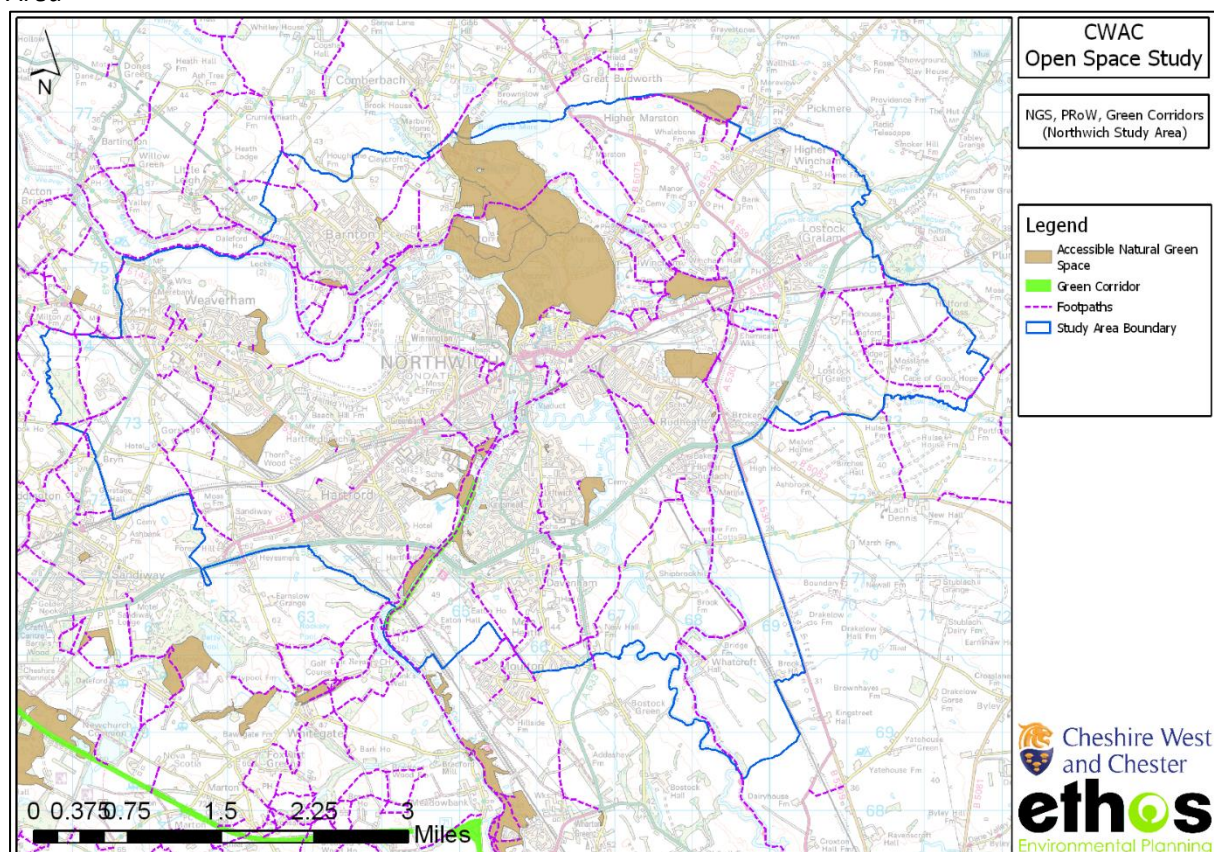


Figure 22 Public Rights of Way, green corridors and natural greenspace across the Northwich Study Area



4.2 Analysis of existing access

Table 6 below summarises the access maps provided at figures 16-22, highlighting any gaps or access issues.

Table 6 Summary of access issues

Typology	Current Access
Allotments	Overall there is a large gap in access to allotments within Northwich. The largest gap is in Davenham and Moulton but also southern Witton and Rudheath has poor access.
Amenity Green Space	Overall access is good with only a few small gaps in Davenham and Moulton.
Parks and Recreation Grounds	Access good across all areas with small area in the west of Hartford and Greenbank with no access.
Play Space (Children)	Good access across most of Northwich with a small gap in provision in west Hartford and Greenbank.
Play Space (Youth)	Large gaps in youth provision in North Witton, Rudheath, Hartford and Greenbank.
Natural Green Space	Good access through out Northwich to ANGTS. This is due to the nature reserves and country parks within the northern part of the Study area.
Natural Greenspace, green corridors and Rights of Way	Relatively good access, with PROW linking natural green space.

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. The following maps provide a summary of the existing quality rank (fig.23), and sites with potential for improvement (fig.24). These draw on the detailed quality audit database provided at 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 23 Existing quality rank of open space

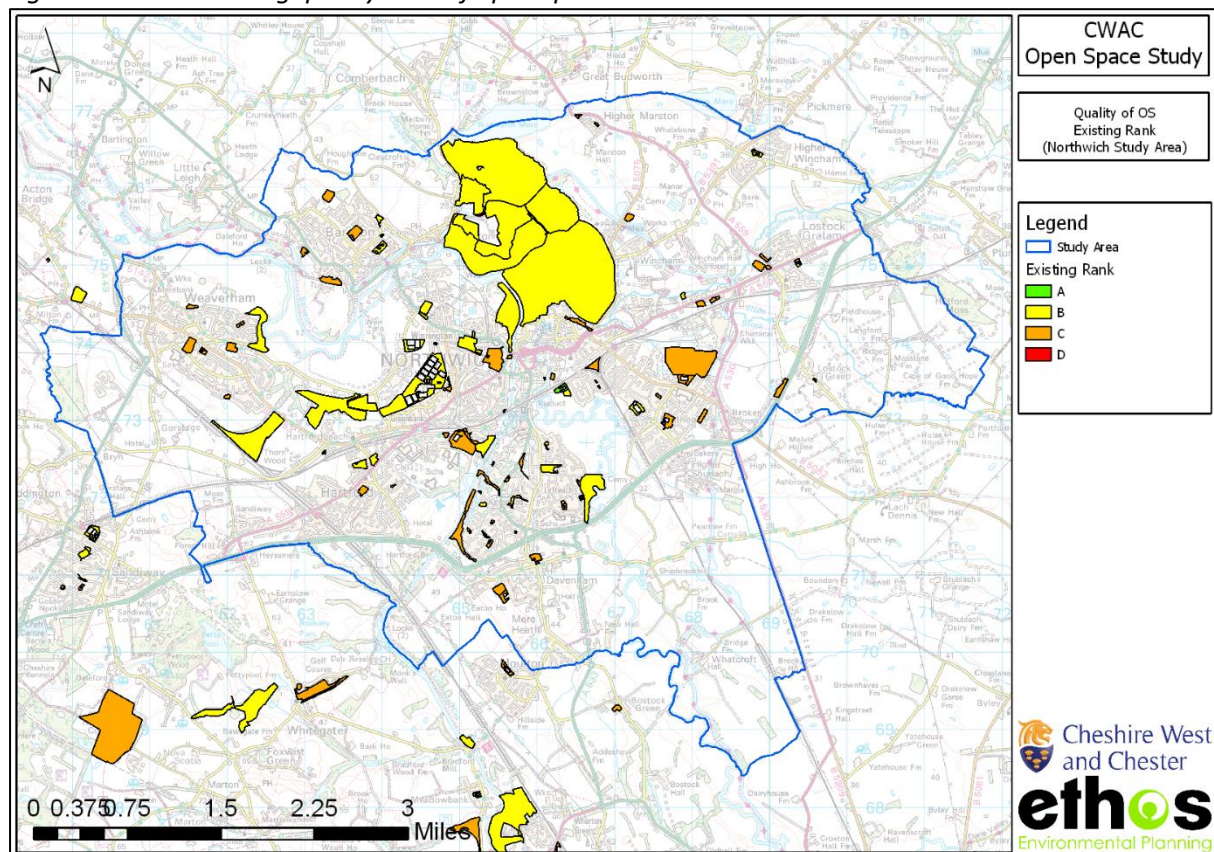
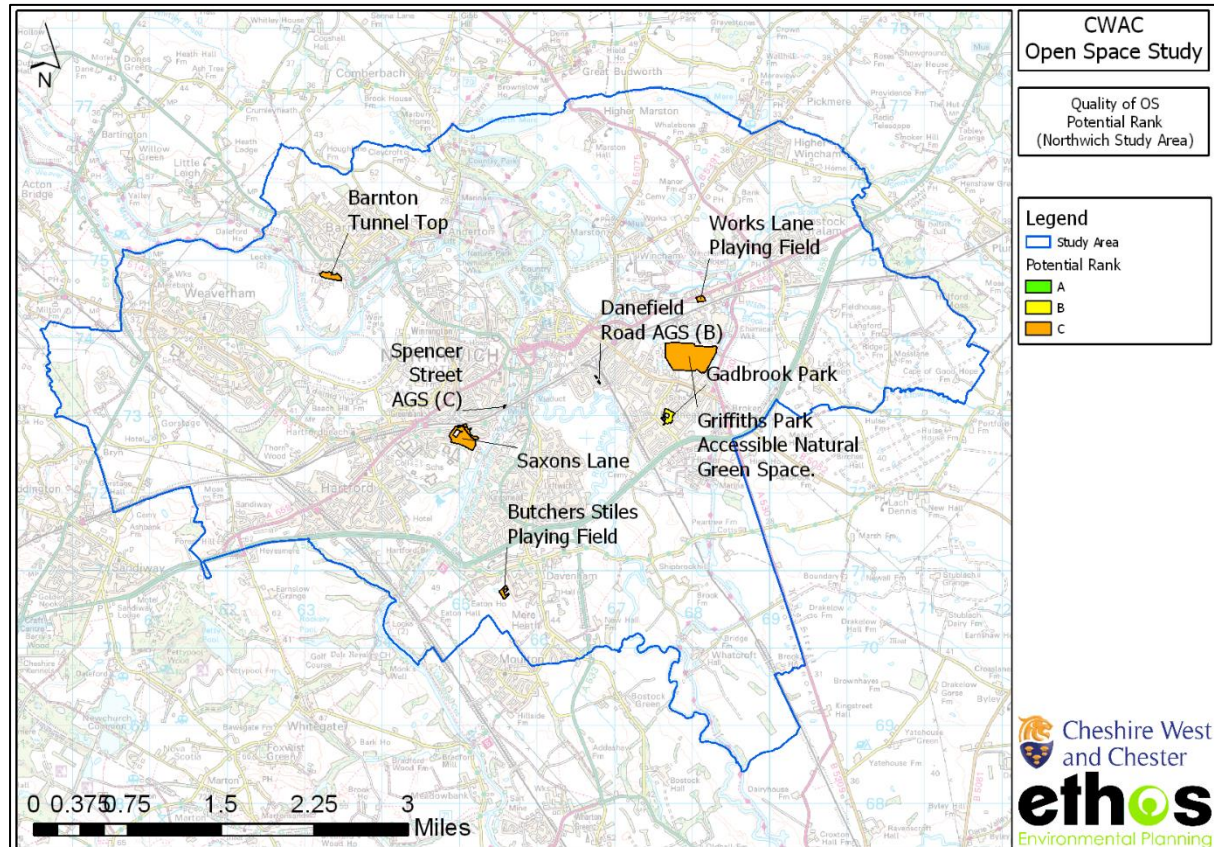


Figure 24 Sites with potential for improvement²



² The potential rank scores have been included in brackets for those sites that are too small to easily identify their rank colour at this scale. It should be noted that a GIS database of sites has also been provided to the Council.

6.0 Future need for Open Space

This section of the report considers the overall implications for green space provision from the predicted population growth for the study area. As the location of all housing allocations are not yet confirmed for this area, the assessment has used the overall identified growth from the local plan. The assessment assumes that growth in the ward and parish study areas would be the same.

6.1 Projected housing growth

The local plan makes provision for at least 4,300 new dwellings and 30ha of additional land for business and industrial development. The Green Belt around Northwich will be maintained and the character and individuality of the settlements that form the wider built up area of Northwich safeguarded.

Key proposals that provide significant potential for regeneration and reuse of previously developed land are:

- *Major housing led mix-used development schemes at Winnington and Wincham Urban villages*
- *The retail led regeneration of Northwich town centre and riverside through the delivery of Northwich Riverside projects, including most importantly the redevelopment of Barons Quay.*

For the purpose of this assessment, an increase in population of 9,890 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 9,890 people, the total population for the area within the local plan period would increase to 64,390 within the parish study area and increase to 49,411 in the ward study area. Using the CWaC standards for open space, the total amount of open space that would be required for an increase in 9,890 people is shown in table 7:

Table 7 Total amount of open space required for increased population growth of 9,890 people

Typology	Standard for new provision	Requirement for 9,890 people (Hectares)
Allotments	0.15	1.48
Amenity/Natural Green Space	1.0	9.89
Park and Recreation Ground	0.5	4.94
Play Space (Children)	0.05	0.49
Play Space (Youth)	0.03	0.29
Total		17.09

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 and 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.

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. For the overall Northwich study area, there is an under supply of allotments and youth play space, but sufficient provision of other typologies. Therefore, the typologies with sufficient provision, could provide opportunity for re-designation or accommodating the typologies where there are shortfalls i.e. allotments and youth space.

Further to this, considering the access gaps identified (summarised in table 6 above), there are also significant gaps in access to allotments, and to a lesser extent access to youth play space. Therefore, the following options could be considered:

- Provision of new allotments in the Greenbank, Kingsmead, Leftwich and Rudheath areas. Potential sites that are located to accommodate this include Old Hall Road AGS, Moss Farm Park, Gadbrook Park (all subject to further assessment/feasibility).
- Provision of youth facilities at Moss Farm Park.

7.3 Identification of areas for new provision

The assessment has shown that there is an existing shortfall of allotments and youth space, both of which also have gaps in access. Therefore, the priority for new development would be to provide these types of open space on-site where feasible. The planned increase in population growth results in the need for open space as shown in table 7 above, however, this does not take into account the existing 'surpluses' in supply e.g. amenity green space exceeds the minimum requirement for the study area by 2.18ha, therefore the resulting requirement for amenity/natural green space to meet the minimum levels required for the population increase within the study area would be 7.71ha (although this figure could be exceeded if development falls within areas that remove gaps in access). It is therefore recommended that this is reviewed every few years to determine how much open space has

been provided within new development and how the resultant overall supply and access stands.

Considering the supply of open space typologies that are in sufficient supply (amenity green space, park and recreation grounds and play space (Children)), the requirements from the projected population increase for the area would result in an overall under supply of amenity green space and play space (children) if no new provision were made – therefore on site provision of these typologies would be required until the required supply was met (taking into account the existing ‘surpluses’ in amenity green space and children’s play space as explained above), and also where there are gaps in access. Although parks and recreation grounds would still be in sufficient supply after the projected population increase (and therefore the priority would be to improve the quality of and access to existing parks and recreation grounds rather than new provision), new provision may still be required where this would remove gaps in access.

7.4 Facilities that may be surplus to requirement

The assessment has shown that whilst there is currently sufficient provision of some typologies of open space, the proposed housing growth would result in a shortfall across all typologies, with the exception of parks and recreation grounds. Although parks and recreation grounds would be in sufficient supply after the projected population increase, they provide opportunity for reducing the shortfalls in other typologies (section 7.2), and therefore their disposal/part disposal should not be considered unless other shortfalls have been addressed. It is therefore recommended that this is reviewed towards the end of the plan period to establish, how much open space has been provided within new development and how the resultant overall supply and access stands.