



Rugby Open Space Quality and Value Assessment

Executive Summary

March 2025
Pub10811.001

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Document Title	Rugby Open Space Quality Assessment
Prepared For	Rugby Borough Council
Prepared By	The Environment Partnership (TEP) Ltd
Document Ref	Pub10811.001

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Date	February 2025
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Amendment History					
Version	Date	Modified By	Check / Approved by	Reason(s) Issue	Status
1.0	28/02/25	IG	RM	Initial Issue	Superseded.
2.0	12/03/25	SB	RM	Update following comments from	Issued.

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TEP was commissioned by Rugby Borough Council in November 2024 to produce an Open Space Quality Assessment for the Borough.

This Study supports the wider Open Space Study which is being prepared by Rugby Borough Council.

Introduction

Open space is important due to its valuable contribution to quality of life, health, and the economy. Provision of a range of open space facilities in our towns and villages is important in planning for a sustainable future and is embedded in national planning policy.

The evidence in this assessment comprises a review of the quality and value of open spaces within the Borough. The Study has been completed using the below methodology:

- Define the context, purpose and scope of the Assessment (Chapter 1);
- Methodology and best practice guidance (Chapter 2);
- Assess the quality and value of each open space (Chapter 3);
- Summarise key pressures faced by open spaces in the Borough (Chapter 4);
- Develop local standards for open space provision (Chapter 5);
- Review of current and future provision of each ward (Chapter 6);
- Provide recommendations and opportunities for improvements to open space quality and value (Chapter 7); and
- Conclusion (Chapter 8).

Methodology

This Study is in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) for Open Space, which have replaced Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation (2002) and its companion guide, Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A companion guide to Planning Policy Guidance 17 (2002).

Open Spaces in the Borough are shown on Figure 1 below.

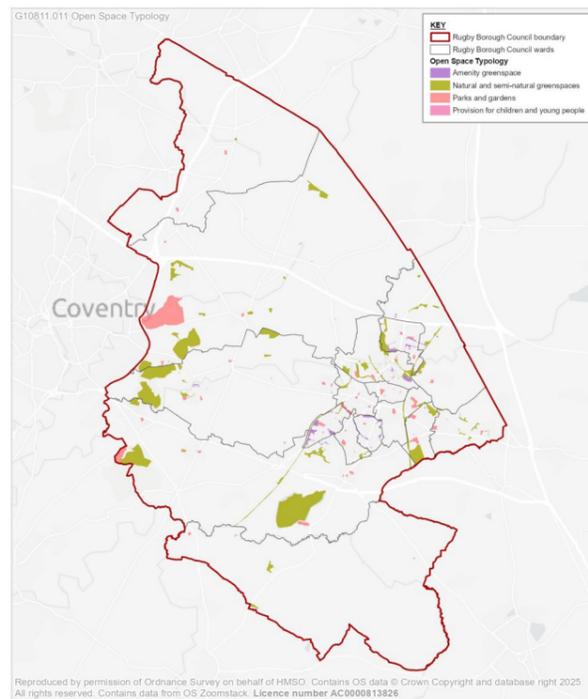


Figure 1: Open Spaces in Rugby Borough

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Auditing Local Provision

279 sites were selected for auditing by Council at the project outset. Of these sites, 267 were audited.

Ten sites were not audited because they were inaccessible. The additional 2 sites were not audited as the geometries will be merged with adjacent sites, as such the quality and value scores have been captured as part of the wider site

The distribution of open space typologies audited for quality and value is shown in Table 1 below.



Image 1: Clay Pits Bike Track in Wolston and the Lawfords ward

Open Space Typology	No. Sites
Amenity Greenspace	38
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace	50
Parks and Gardens	62
Provision for Children and Young People	117
Final Total	267

Table 1: A table showing the distribution of open space typologies audited as part of quality and value assessments

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Quality Assessment

267 open spaces were audited for quality and value.

The quality audits were based on the Green Flag Award National Benchmark:

- Excellent - 90% to 100%
- Very Good - 80% to 89%
- Good - 70% to 79%
- Fair - 50% to 69%
- Poor - 0% to 49%

Figure 2 to the right shows the distribution of quality scores for the 267 audited sites.

Figure 3 below shows the quality scores per typology.



Figure 2: Open Space Quality Audit Scores (Borough-Wide)

Quality Audit Scores by Typology

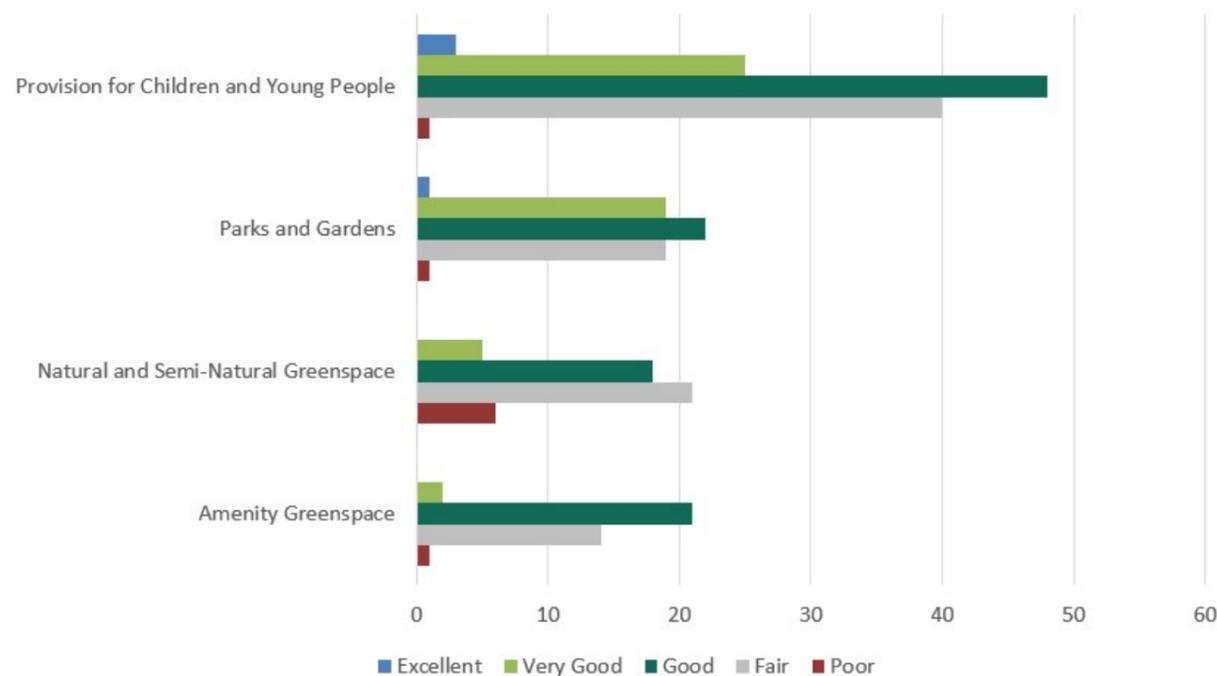


Figure 3: Open Space Quality Audit Scores by Typology

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Value Assessment

The value standard is based on 'Assessing needs and opportunities: a companion guide to PPG17'. This allows a balanced assessment of each site. The value standard bandings are:

- High - 60 to 100%;
- Medium - 40 to 59%; and
- Low - 0 to 39%

Figure 4 to the right shows the distribution of value scores for the 267 audited sites. Figure 5 below shows the value audit scores by typology.

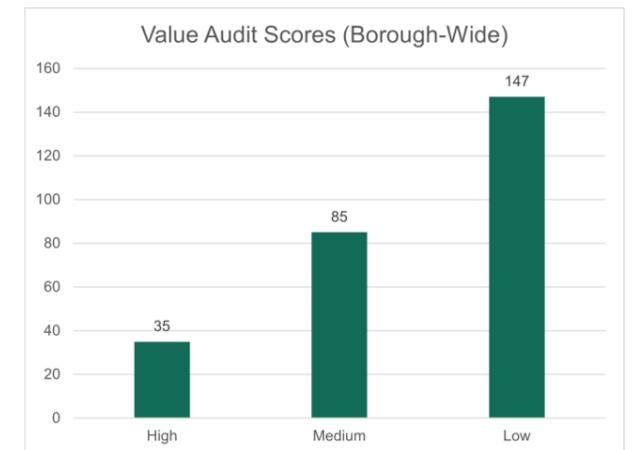


Figure 4: Value Audit Scores (Borough-Wide)

Value Audit Scores by Typology

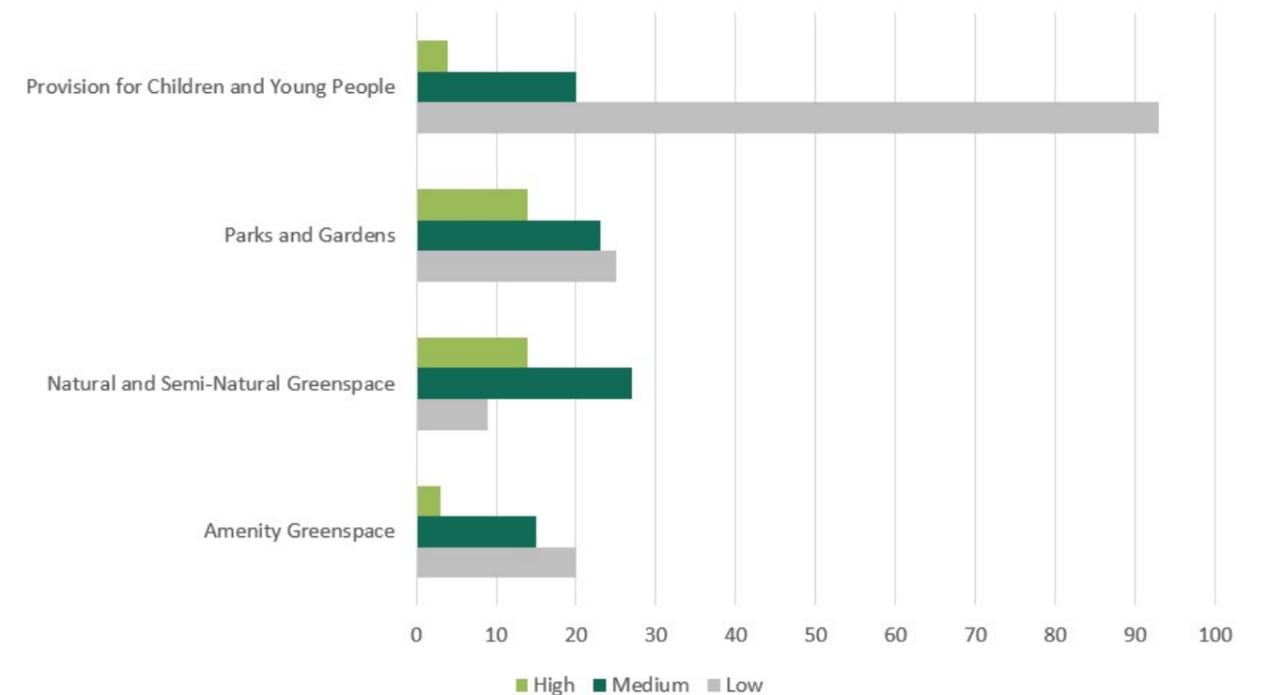


Figure 5: Open Space Value Audit Scores by Typology

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Proposed Standards

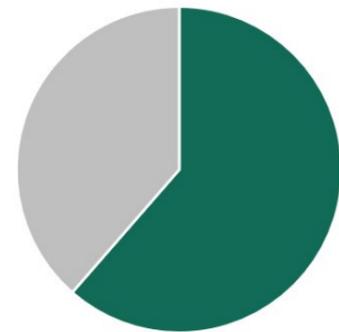
Quality

The proposed quality standard for open space across the Borough is based on the Green Flag Award Criteria, specifically considering Green Flag Award Section 1: A Welcoming Place, Section 2: Healthy, Safe and Secure and Section 3: Well Maintained.

The proposed quality standard is 70%. This ensures that all sites achieve at least a **Good quality** score.

Figure 6 shows the proportion of the sites audited that currently achieve the proposed quality standard (61%).

Proportion of Sites Achieving the Proposed Quality Standard



■ At or above quality standard ■ Below quality standard

Figure 6: Proportion of audited sites that meet the proposed quality standard.

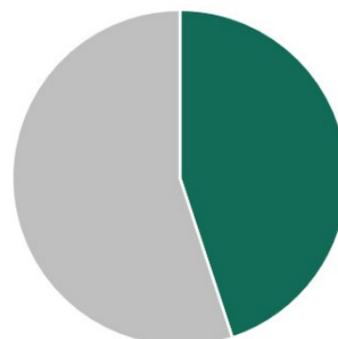
Value

The proposed value standard for open spaces in the Borough is based on Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to Planning Policy Guidance 17 (2002).

The proposed value standard is 40%. This ensures that all sites achieve at least a **Medium value** score.

Figure 7 shows the proportion of the sites audited that currently achieve the proposed value standard (45%).

Proportion of Sites Achieving the Proposed Value Standard



■ At or above value standard ■ Below value standard

Figure 7: Proportion of audited sites that meet the proposed value standard.

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Applying Standards by Ward

Quality

Whilst 61% of audited sites currently meet the proposed quality standard of 70%, the proportion of sites which reach the standard varies per ward.

Clifton, Newton and Churchover ward has the lowest average quality score (62.31) across the Borough. Wolvey and Shilton ward has the highest (80.40) average quality score across the Borough.

Figure 8 shows the average quality score by ward, relative to the proposed quality standard.



Figure 8: Average Quality Audit Scores by Ward

Value

Less than half (45%) of audited sites meet the proposed value standard of 40%.

Admirals and Cawston ward has the lowest average value score (27.16) across the Borough. Wolvey and Shilton ward has the highest (57.60) average value score across the Borough.

Figure 9 shows the average value score by ward, relative to the proposed value standard.

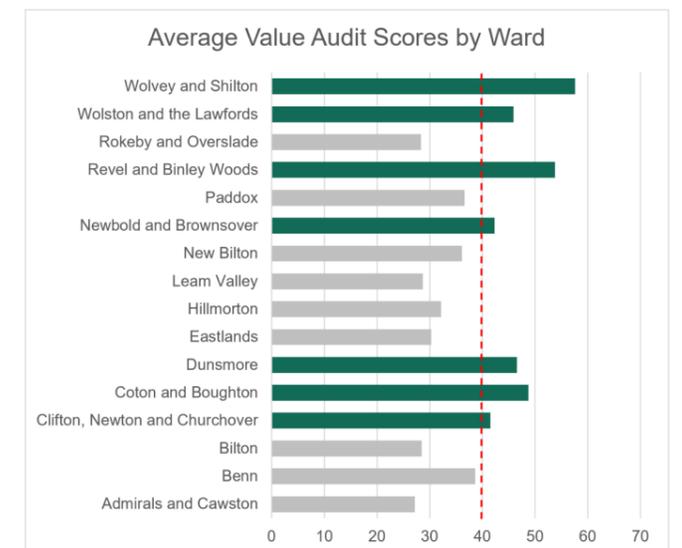


Figure 9: Average Value Audit Scores by Ward

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Opportunities

The quality and value improvements generally fall into two categories:

- Maintenance e.g. litter picking, cleansing; or
- Capital works e.g. bench and signage installation and creating wildflower meadows.

Opportunities to uplift the quality and value of audited sites are presented in Chapter 7 - Opportunities per typology. The opportunities include:

Quality:

- Install additional lighting, benches, and litter bins;
- Improve signage and navigational aids;
- Undertake litter picking; and
- General cleaning and maintenance of walkways, grass and play equipment.

Value:

- Introduction of wildflower meadows;
- Clearing glades within woodland; and
- Installation of natural play.

Other opportunities to uplift the quality and value of open space in the Borough are identified under the following key headings.

Staffing

Provision of a town park ranger to foster partnership and volunteering opportunities.

Appointing a green infrastructure champion to steer improvements to open space.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Identification of sites which may be suitable to provide off-site biodiversity units. This would improve habitat, multifunctionality and secure maintenance to the habitats for 30 years.

Signage and Interpretation

Improvements to signage through completion of a signage audit and production of a signage and interpretation strategy, including a design guide.

Recommendations are also made towards a wayfinding strategy to encourage sustainable travel through a series of linked spaces.



Image 2: Houlton Play Area in Hillmorton ward



Image 3: Houlton Recreation Ground in Hillmorton ward.

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