

London Borough of Bexley

**Bexley Green Infrastructure
Study**

**Evidence on Green
Infrastructure, Open Space
and Sports, Biodiversity
and Metropolitan Open
Land**

Part 2: Chapters 6 to 8

London Borough of Bexley

Bexley Green Infrastructure Study Evidence on Green Infrastructure, Open Space and Sports, Biodiversity and Metropolitan Open Land

Project Number
10228

Version	Status	Prepared	Checked	Approved	Date
1.	Draft report	D Manson K Moroney H Little	K Moroney	D Manson	22.07.2019
2.	Revised draft report	D Manson K Moroney	D Manson	D Manson	28.10.2019
3.	Final draft	D Manson K Stenson K Moroney	D Manson	D Manson	04.03.2020
4.	Final Report	K Moroney D Manson	D Manson	D Manson	14.04.2020

Contents

Chapter 1	1	Population, household and economic growth	40
Executive Summary	1	Health and wellbeing	49
Purpose of this study	1	Climate change	58
Approach to the study	1	Biodiversity	64
Open space findings	3	Landscape and historic environment	66
Playing pitches findings	4	Active travel network	70
Metropolitan Open Land findings	5		
Urban greening findings	5	Chapter 6	75
Biodiversity, geology and geodiversity findings	6	Open Space Evidence Base	75
Cemetery capacity findings	7	Typologies of open space	75
Bexley's Green and Blue Infrastructure network	7	Current provision	77
		Characteristics of current provision	90
		Summary of feedback from public consultation	107
		Summary of feedback from stakeholder consultation	115
		Development of standards	120
		Proposed standards	122
		Application of proposed standards	124
		Summary of open space findings	138
Chapter 2	10		
Introduction	10	Chapter 7	141
What is Green Infrastructure	10	Playing Pitches Evidence Base	141
Study aims and objectives	14	Cricket assessment	143
Structure of this report	14	Football assessment	144
		Hockey assessment	147
		Rugby assessment	148
		Other outdoor sports assessment	150
		Current and future demand for playing pitches	151
		Summary of playing pitch assessment findings	154
Chapter 3	16		
Methodology	16	Chapter 8	158
Open Space	18	Metropolitan Open Land Evidence Base	158
Playing Pitches	19	Openness Assessment of the current MOL designation	158
Metropolitan Open Land	22	Consideration of potential new MOL	170
Urban Greening	25	Summary of Metropolitan Open land findings	175
Biodiversity, Geology and Geodiversity	25		
Cemeteries	26	Chapter 9	178
Bringing it all together: The GBI Network	26	Urban Greening Evidence Base	178
Presenting the study	27	Green roofs and walls	178
		Street trees and tree canopy	179
Chapter 4	29		
Planning Policy Context	29		
National Policy	29		
Regional Policy	30		
Local Policy	36		
Other relevant guidance and strategies	37		
Chapter 5	40		
The Bexley Context: Drivers for GI	40		

Contents

Private gardens	182		
Summary of urban greening findings	187		
Chapter 10	189	Appendix D	D-1
Biodiversity, Geology and Geodiversity Evidence Base	189	Audit Forms (separate volume)	D-1
Geology and geodiversity	189	Appendix E	E-1
Biodiversity	190	Results of Online Survey	E-1
Chapter 11	199	Appendix F	F-1
Cemeteries Evidence Base	199	Summary of Open Space Standards in Neighbouring Boroughs	F-1
Current provision	199	Appendix G	G-1
Demand	199	Open Space Quality and Value Ratings	G-1
Indicative costs	201	Appendix H	H-1
Summary of cemetery capacity findings	201	Glossary and Abbreviations	H-1
Chapter 12	203	Glossary	H-1
The Bexley Green and Blue Infrastructure Network	203	Abbreviations	H-3
Definition of Green Infrastructure	203	Appendix I	I-1
Green Infrastructure Focus Map	204	Data List	I-1
The Sub Areas and Links of the Borough	213	Appendix J	J-1
	218	Playing Pitch Audit - Sport Specific Action Plan	J-1
Chapter 13	219	Appendix K	K-1
Embedding Green Infrastructure within Bexley's Local Plan	219	Playing Pitch Audit - Site Specific Action Plans	K-1
GI Policy in Bexley's Local Plan	219	Table of Tables	
Measurable standards	221	Table 3.1: MOL openness ratings	24
Appendix A	A-1	Table 5.1: Value of public parks in Bexley (value expressed in million £s)	46
Review of Planning Policy	A-1	Table 5.2: London Environment Strategy targets	64
Appendix B	B-1	Table 6.1: Open space typologies	76
Large Format Map of Sites	B-1	Table 6.2: Open space by primary typology and hierarchy in Bexley	77
Appendix C	C-1	Table 6.3: Summary of current provision of all open space by Geographic Region	78
Audit Form Scoring Criteria	C-1		

Contents

Table 6.4: Summary of accessibility of sites	81	Table 10.1: Priority habitats	192
Table 6.5: Quantity of publicly accessible open space by Geographic Region	81	Table 11.1: Availability of burial space at Council managed cemeteries	200
Table 6.6: Total amount of accessible open space by typology when secondary typologies are included in the typology totals	84	Table 13.1: Examples of measurable standards relating to GI	221
Table 6.7: Equipped play provision by typology	85	Table A.1: Detailed review of relevant planning policy and programmes	A-2
Table 6.8: Other play provision by primary typology	86	Table F.1: Accessibility standards adopted by nearby local authorities	F-2
Table 6.9: Playable spaces by Geographic Region	87	Table F.2: Quantity standards adopted by nearby local authorities	F-4
Table 6.10: Ages catered for by play sites by Geographic Region	87	Table G.1: Quality and Value Ratings for Open Space Sites in Bexley	G-2
Table 6.11: Condition of other play provision in Bexley	105	Table G.2: Quality and Value Ratings for Play Sites in Bexley	G-24
Table 6.12: Breakdown of respondents' satisfaction with quality of parks and open spaces in Bexley	108	Table I.1: GIS data presented in the Bexley Green Infrastructure Study	I-2
Table 6.13: Stakeholder consultation findings	116		
Table 6.14: Quality and value matrix	121		
Table 6.15: Proposed public open space standards for Bexley	122		
Table 6.16: Proposed standards for allotment provision in Bexley	123		
Table 6.17: Proposed standards for play provision in Bexley	124		
Table 6.18: Application of open space quantity standard to identify shortfall/surplus	125		
Table 6.19: Provision of allotments against the quantity standard	126		
Table 6.20: Relative provision of playable spaces per Geographic Region	126		
Table 7.1: Summary of findings for cricket	143		
Table 7.2: Summary of findings for football	144		
Table 7.3: Summary of findings for hockey	147		
Table 7.4: Summary of findings for rugby	148		
Table 7.5: Current and future Demand playing pitch sports and Geographic Area required	151		
Table 8.1: Assessment of openness for current MOL designation	160		
Table 8.2: Consideration of new land for potential designation as MOL	171		
Table 8.3: Recommended minor boundary adjustments	175		
Table 8.4: Summary of potential new MOL additions	175		
Table 9.1: Breakdown of top 10 street tree (broad) species in Bexley	179		
Table 9.2: Street trees by Geographic Region	180		
Table 9.3: Top ten broad species by Geographic Region	180		
Table 9.4: Street trees by age class	181		
Table 9.5: Tree canopy cover by London Borough	181		

Table of Figures

Figure 1.1: Overview of method	2
Figure 2.1: Multiple benefits of GI	12
Figure 3.1: Method overview	17
Figure 3.2: Geographic Regions	20
Figure 3.3: The 10 steps to delivering a Playing Pitch Strategy	21
Figure 5.1: Population density	42
Figure 5.2: Growth strategy	48
Figure 5.3: Index of Multiple Deprivation	51
Figure 5.4: Health and Disability Deprivation	52
Figure 5.5: Childhood obesity	53
Figure 5.6: Air quality	56
Figure 5.7: Noise	57
Figure 5.8: Flood risk (rivers and seas)	61
Figure 5.9: Surface water flooding	62
Figure 5.10: Road Runoff Water Quality	63
Figure 5.11: Landscape character	68
Figure 5.12: Cultural heritage	69
Figure 5.13: Active travel network	73
Figure 6.1: Approach to calculating quantity of provision by typology	77
Figure 6.2: Sites by primary typology	80
Figure 6.3: Site access	83
Figure 6.4: Play sites	88
Figure 6.5: Sports sites	89

Contents

Figure 6.6: To what extent are the entrances well presented?	90	Figure 6.34: Mode of transport used to access open space	111
Figure 6.7: What is the overall provision of signage?	91	Figure 6.35: Travel time to open space	112
Figure 6.8: What is the overall quality of access and accesses within and through the open space?	91	Figure 6.36: Accessibility of allotments in Bexley in terms of the travel times of respondents to the site they make use of	113
Figure 6.9: A Welcoming place – summary of audit results	92	Figure 6.37: Mode of travel to allotments	114
Figure 6.10: Is there natural surveillance into the site from surrounding properties?	93	Figure 6.38: Range of quality and value ratings across typologies	127
Figure 6.11: Do the approaches feel open and secure?	94	Figure 6.39: Quality and value ratings	129
Figure 6.12: Is there a flow of people through the open space (to achieve self-surveillance)?	94	Figure 6.40: Metropolitan site access	130
Figure 6.13: Healthy, safe and secure – summary of audit results	94	Figure 6.41: District site access	131
Figure 6.14: Overall condition/quality of planted areas	95	Figure 6.42: Local site access	132
Figure 6.15: Overall condition/quality of grass areas	96	Figure 6.43: Small local site access	133
Figure 6.16: Overall condition/quality of footpaths	96	Figure 6.44: Access to publicly accessible open space	134
Figure 6.17: Overall condition/quality of buildings	97	Figure 6.45: Combined deficiency	135
Figure 6.18: Clean and well-maintained – summary of audit results	97	Figure 6.46: Access to allotments	136
Figure 6.19: Evidence of sustainable management practices	99	Figure 6.47: Access to equipped play	137
Figure 6.20: Environmental management – summary of audit results	99	Figure 7.1: Existing playing pitch types by site in geographic areas	142
Figure 6.21: Evidence that natural features are being managed for nature conservation	100	Figure 8.1: Assessment of openness of current MOL designation	169
Figure 6.22: Biodiversity, landscape and heritage – summary of audit results	100	Figure 9.1: Street tree network	183
Figure 6.23: Is there evidence of an active community group?	101	Figure 9.2: Street trees by broad species	184
Figure 6.24: Is there a permanent public noticeboard on site?	101	Figure 9.3: Canopy cover	185
Figure 6.25: Community involvement – summary of audit results	102	Figure 9.4: Private gardens	186
Figure 6.26: Does the open space contain public art?	103	Figure 10.1: Biodiversity and geodiversity	195
Figure 6.27: Is there a programme of cultural or other community activities?	103	Figure 10.2: Open space sites with potential for biodiversity enhancements	196
Figure 6.28: Marketing and culture	104	Figure 10.3: Priority habitats, SINCs and ancient woodland	197
Figure 6.29: Condition of play equipment by age category	104	Figure 12.1: GI Focus map extract for Bexley	205
Figure 6.30: Play sites in Bexley	105	Figure 12.2: GI assets in Bexley	206
Figure 6.31: Teen provision in Bexley	106	Figure 12.3: GI in Belvedere	207
Figure 6.32: The perceived need for different typologies of open space in Bexley	109	Figure 12.4: GI in Bexleyheath	208
Figure 6.33: Accessibility to open space	110	Figure 12.5: GI in Crayford and Old Bexley	209
		Figure 12.6: GI in Erith	210
		Figure 12.7: GI in Sidcup	211
		Figure 12.8: GI in Welling	212
		Figure 12.9: GI Opportunities Map	217

6 Open Space Evidence Base



Chapter 6

Open Space Evidence Base

This chapter presents evidence on open space, play and allotment provision in Bexley. It culminates in the development of quantity, quality/value and accessibility standards.

This chapter presents the assessment and findings of the open space assessment. The chapter is organised as follows:

- Typologies of open space – describing the types of open spaces assessed and presented in this evidence base. This chapter sets out the approach to categorising and organising sites by typology and hierarchy.
- Current provision – sets out the quantity of open space in the borough.
- Characteristics of current provision – sets out the results of the quality and value audit; organised according to the Green Flag Award themes.
- Summary of feedback from public consultation – summarises the findings of the online public consultation exercise.
- Summary of feedback from stakeholder consultation – summarises the findings of the stakeholder consultation.
- Development of standards – sets out the approach to developing standards for quantity, quality/value and accessibility.
- Proposed standards – sets out the proposed standards for Bexley
- Application of standards – sets out the results of applying the proposed standards. This chapter is supported by numerous maps showing the spatial variations in access to open space.

Typologies of open space

6.2 The range of typologies used is shown in **Table 6.1**

Table 6.1: Open space typologies

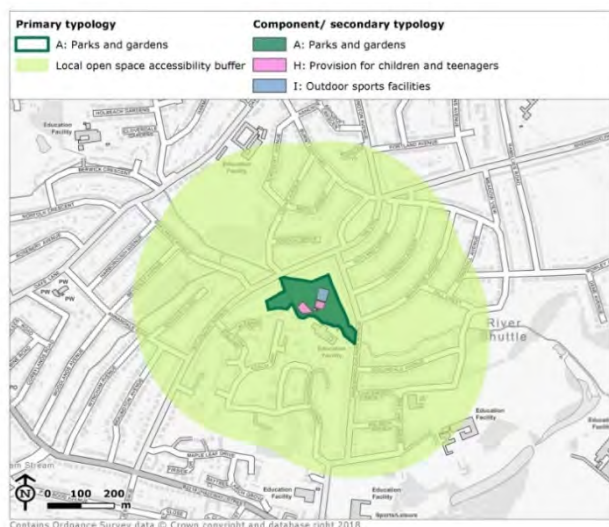
Type of open space	Primary purpose
A. Parks and gardens	Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events. More multi-functional than other open space, offering space for quiet relaxation as well as a range of amenities and activities for visitors. Parks and gardens often include children’s play, youth and/or outdoor sports facilities.
B. Natural and semi-natural urban green space	Wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education awareness.
C. Linear Open Space	Walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel, and opportunities for wildlife migration.
D. Amenity Green Space	Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work. Amenity Green Spaces provide a less formal green space experience than parks and gardens, and generally provides fewer habitats
E. Allotments	Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.
F. Cemeteries and Churchyards	Quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.
G. Civic Space	Providing a setting for civic buildings and community events. None included in this study.
H. Provision for Children/ Young People	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters.
I. Outdoor Sports Provision	Participation in outdoor sports, such as pitch sports, tennis, bowls, athletics, or countryside and water sports.
J. Agricultural Land	Land in agricultural use.

Multi-functionality

Due to the multi-functional nature of the open spaces in Bexley, some facilities (e.g. play spaces and sports pitches) are often located within other types of space, such as a parks and gardens. In order to ensure that sites falling within wider spaces are considered in the analysis, these sites were given a ‘secondary’ typology. When calculating total quantities of provision of, say, parks and gardens, the area of playspace or pitches within them was excluded. This ensured no double counting across typologies. However, when applying accessibility catchments, it is considered that it is the ‘total site’ that defines the catchment. So, for example, a football

pitch and playground within a park are likely enhance its popularity. Therefore, when accessibility catchments have been applied, the total area has been used to calculate the appropriate buffer. This is illustrated in **Figure 6.1**.

Figure 6.1: Approach to calculating quantity of provision by typology



Categorisation of sites by hierarchy

The London open space hierarchy

It is helpful to categorise open space by size, as this influences the functions it can provide to a community, as well as the distance that people are likely to travel to use it. Having reviewed the size and features of the open spaces in Bexley, it was considered that hierarchical levels identified in the London Mayor’s Guidance for open space strategies are appropriate for the borough. Small sites and Pocket parks have been combined into a ‘small local’ level as shown below:

- Metropolitan sites (60-400ha)
- District sites (20-60ha)
- Local sites (2-20ha)
- Small local sites (<2ha)

Site areas were calculated for each site (based on whole sites rather than individual components) and categorised according to the London open space hierarchy.

Current provision

Open space

Following the assignment of a primary typology and hierarchy to each of the sites, **Table 6.2** summarises the quantity of provision by typology and hierarchy within the borough. Where relevant, sites have been assigned to the various levels of the hierarchy based on their size as set out in paragraph 6.4.

These size classifications match those used in the 2008 study, although further distinction between typologies has now been used to differentiate between Parks and gardens and Natural and semi-natural urban green space at the various levels of the hierarchy. The classification is based on size only. The number of features and functions available in each site is assessed through the value assessment covered in more detail in the next section.

As a result of a review of the site boundaries through the GIS assessment and site audits, some site areas have changed, and some sites have been clustered or disaggregated into discrete parts.

Table 6.2: Open space by primary typology and hierarchy in Bexley

Primary typology	Hierarchy	Area (ha) within Bexley	Count	Examples
A: Parks and gardens	Metropolitan	73.7	1	Danson Park
	District	115.3	3	East Wickham Open Space
	Local	177.7	28	Abbey Hill Park
	Small local	8.4	8	Steeple Avenue Memorial Gardens and Highway Land

Primary typology	Hierarchy	Area (ha) within Bexley	Count	Examples
	TOTAL	375.0	40	
B: Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces	Metropolitan	327.3	4	Lesnes Abbey Woods
	District	178.4	6	Erith Marshes (Part) North
	Local	190.4	28	Churchfield Wood
	Small local	18.4	19	Beverley Woods
	TOTAL	714.5	57	
C: Linear open spaces		27.7	18	Thames-side Path
D: Amenity green spaces		51.3	58	Palmar Gardens
E: Allotments, community gardens and city farms		48.2	37	Gilbert Road Allotments
F: Cemeteries and churchyards		30.0	14	Erith Cemetery
H: Provision for children and teenagers (as a primary typology)		6.6	19	Monarch Road Playground
Bexley Total		1,253.3	243	

Note: A significant portion of Chalk Wood (site 214) is outside of the borough, but it has been recorded as a Metropolitan site given its overall size. Similarly, a large portion of A2 Roadside Verge linear open space (site 150) is outside of the borough.

Table 6.3 summarises the provision by typology in each Geographic Region (in hectares). **Figure 6.2** shows all the

sites by their primary typology. A larger version of this figure can be found in **Appendix B**.

Table 6.3: Summary of current provision of all open space by Geographic Region

Primary typology	Belvedere	Bexleyheath	Crayford and Old Bexley	Erith	Sidcup	Welling	Total
A: Parks and gardens	41.5	69.8	44.7	42.3	70.5	106.2	375.0
B: Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces	188.4	17.7	173.9	126.2	199.0	9.3	714.5
C: Linear open spaces	17.3		4.9	0.3	5.2		27.7

Primary typology	Belvedere	Bexleyheath	Crayford and Old Bexley	Erith	Sidcup	Welling	Total
D: Amenity green spaces	4.2	5.2	11.5	9.0	17.9	3.5	51.3
E: Allotments, community gardens and city farms	4.5	3.3	8.5	5.9	17.0	9.1	48.2
F: Cemeteries and churchyards	0.3	3.8	7.0	11.3	1.6	5.9	30.0
H: Provision for children and teenagers	3.5	0.2	0.9	0.7		1.3	6.6
Bexley total	259.6	100.0	251.5	195.7	311.1	135.4	1,253.3

There is additional provision for children and young people found within other primary typologies and this will be considered in detail later in this section. Similarly, there are additional sports facilities found within other typologies.

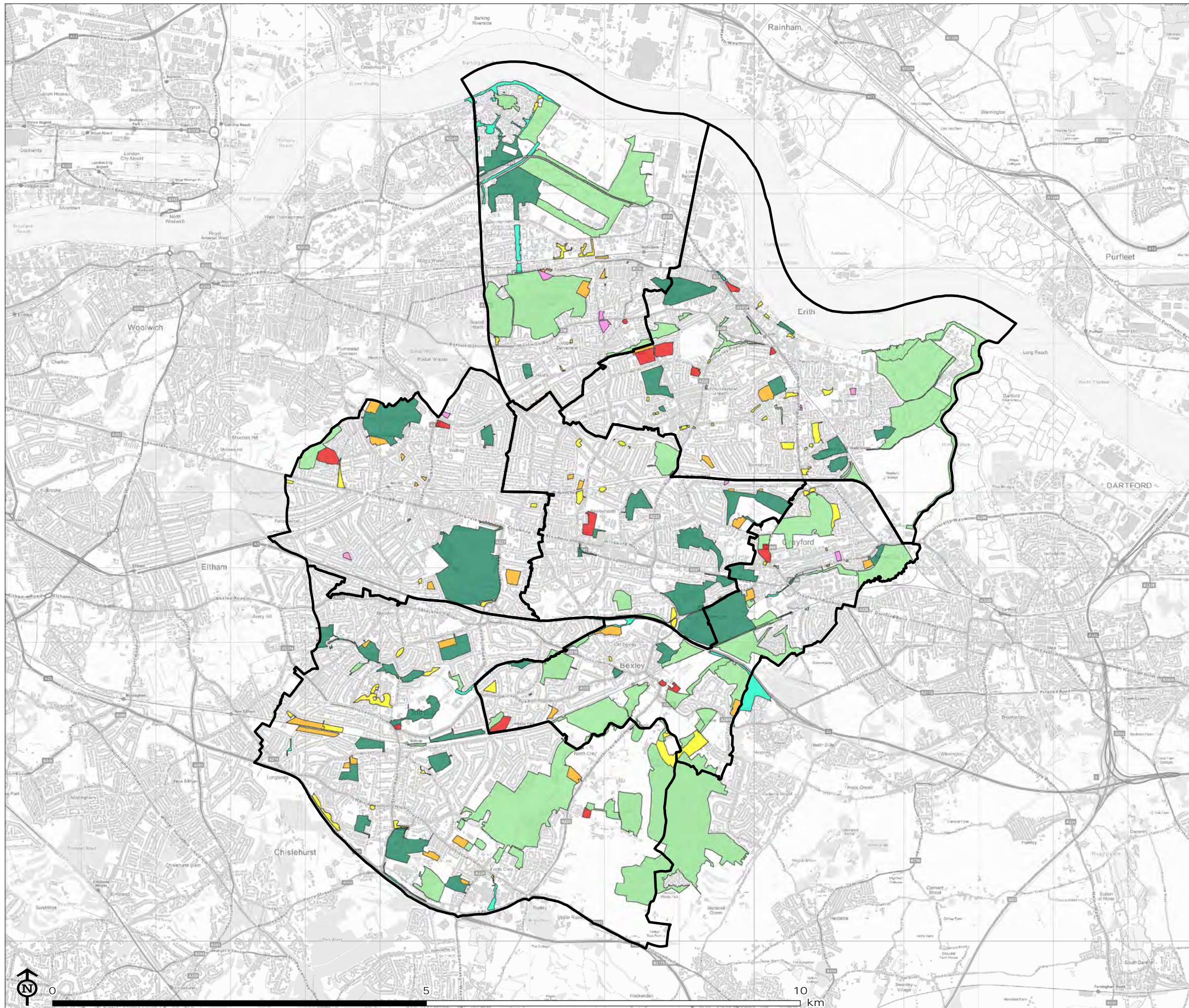
Of the above sites, not all the provision is accessible to the public. For the purposes of this assessment, sites categorised as publicly accessible are those that are freely accessible or those that are accessible with opening hour's restrictions. Sites are 'not publicly accessible' if they have other restrictions on access or are completely closed to the public.

For the purposes of this assessment, sites that have been omitted from the audit process include:

- Agricultural land
- Open space associated with educational facilities

Bexley Green Infrastructure Study

Figure 6.2: Open space primary typology



- Geographic regions
- A: Parks and gardens
- B: Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces
- C: Linear open spaces
- D: Amenity green spaces
- E: Allotments, community gardens and city farms
- F: Cemeteries and churchyards
- H: Provision for children and teenagers

Map Scale @A3: 1:50,000



Table 6.4 shows the quantity of open space assessed for this study and its accessibility. This information is shown in **Figure 6.3**.

Table 6.4: Summary of accessibility of sites

Primary typology	Publicly accessible (ha)	Members only (ha)	Not publicly accessible (ha)
A: Parks and gardens	375.0		
B: Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces	626.4		88.2
C: Linear open spaces	24.3		3.4
D: Amenity green spaces	38.4		12.9
E: Allotments, community gardens and city farms		48.2*	
F: Cemeteries and churchyards	28.8		1.2
H: Provision for children and teenagers	6.6		
Bexley total	1,099.4	48.2	105.7

*It was not possible to access Coldblow allotment to audit it. This is not an LBB site.

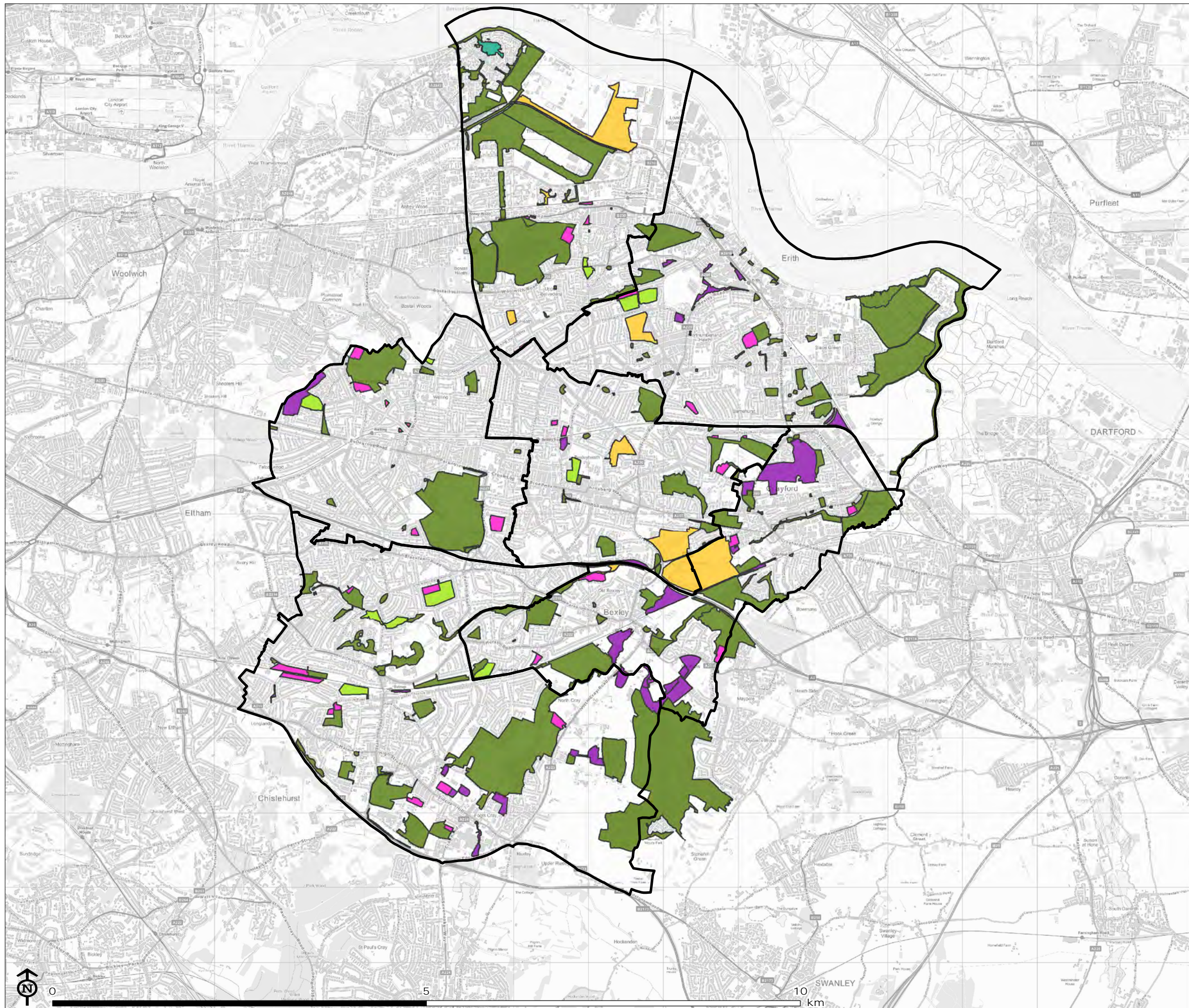
Table 6.5 shows how the publicly accessible open spaces are distributed between the six Geographic Regions used for this assessment.

Table 6.5: Quantity of publicly accessible open space by Geographic Region

Primary typology	Belvedere	Bexleyheath	Crayford and Old Bexley	Erith	Sidcup	Welling	Total
A: Parks and gardens	41.48	69.76	44.74	42.32	70.50	106.17	374.97
B: Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces	188.41	15.84	120.69	117.73	183.70		626.36
C: Green corridors	17.30		4.54	0.33	2.14		24.31
D: Amenity green spaces	4.19	3.85	5.17	8.98	12.68	3.53	38.39
F: Cemeteries and churchyards	0.29	3.79	7.02	10.07	1.63	5.94	28.74

Primary typology	Belvedere	Bexleyheath	Crayford and Old Bexley	Erith	Sidcup	Welling	Total
H: Provision for children and teenagers	3.47	0.23	0.87	0.70		1.33	6.60
Total publicly accessible	255.14	93.47	183.03	180.13	270.65	116.96	1,099.39
<i>E: Allotments, community gardens and city farms</i>	4.47	3.28	8.50	5.86	16.98	9.10	48.19

Figure 6.3: Site access



- Geographic regions
- Site access
- Freely accessible to public
- Freely accessible to public: opening hours
- De facto public access
- Majority freely accessible with some restricted areas
- Restricted public access: members/ tenants only
- No public access

Map Scale @A3: 1:50,000



Using the approach outlined in **Figure 6.1**, a number of secondary typologies were identified within larger sites. **Table 6.6** shows the breakdown of typologies when secondary types are considered.

Table 6.6: Total amount of accessible open space by typology when secondary typologies are included in the typology totals

Open space by primary typology				
Primary typology	Ownership			Total
	London Borough of Bexley	Part London Borough of Bexley owned and part private owned	Other	
A: Parks and gardens	312.09	26.38	36.50	374.97
B: Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces	226.74	87.58	312.04	626.36
C: Linear open spaces	1.54	2.54	20.23	24.31
D: Amenity green spaces	22.81	1.27	14.32	38.39
E: Allotments, community gardens and city farms	46.11		2.08	48.19
F: Cemeteries and churchyards	19.80		8.94	28.74
H: Provision for children and teenagers	5.77		0.83	6.60
Open space by primary typology with secondary typology considered*				
Primary and secondary typology	Ownership			Total
	London Borough of Bexley	Part London Borough of Bexley owned and part private owned or part unregistered ownership	Other	
A: Parks and gardens	260.15	25.89	35.96	322.00
B: Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces	243.50	87.58	312.00	643.07
C: Linear open spaces	1.54	3.53	19.11	24.18

Open space by primary typology				
D: Amenity green spaces	26.36	1.27	14.52	42.15
E: Allotments, community gardens and city farms	45.15		2.08	47.23
F: Cemeteries and churchyards	20.05		8.94	28.98
H: Provision for children and teenagers	6.76	0.28	1.35	8.39
I: Outdoor sports facilities**	31.35	0.21		31.56

*This is calculated as follows. If, for example, a park and garden has a play area, the primary typology would be the total area of the park and garden and play area. When the secondary typology is considered, the area covered by the play area would be taken from the primary typology and included as the secondary typology (as provision for children and teenagers). This would make the total area of park and garden lower (play area removed) but the area for provision for children and teenagers higher.

**Outdoor sports facilities (as a primary typology) were not included in this audit so do not appear as a primary typology, however outdoor sports facilities were recorded within other typologies so appear as a secondary typology. Consideration of outdoor sports facilities as a primary typology is the subject of Chapter 7: Playing pitches evidence base.

Play provision

30% of the audited sites contained play provision. 54 play areas and 48 other play¹¹¹ areas were identified in 55 of the audited open spaces. 19 sites have a primary typology of

‘Provision for children and teenagers’. The rest of the equipped play provision is found with other typologies as shown in **Table 6.7** and **Table 6.8**. The majority are found in parks and gardens, which is to be expected. Sites with play provision are shown in **Figure 6.4**.

Table 6.7: Equipped play provision by typology

Typology	Number of sites with play provision
A: Parks and gardens	24
B: Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces	2
C: Linear open spaces	1
D: Amenity green spaces	5
H: Provision for children and teenagers	17
Total	49

¹¹¹ Other play consists of MUGA (Multi-use games area), green gyms, trim trails, wheels parks (skate or BMX), basketball courts, ping pong tables or parkour equipment.

Table 6.8: Other play provision by primary typology

Typology	Green gym	MUGA	Trim trail	Wheels park (skate or BMX)	Other*
A: Parks and gardens	5	12	2	4	2
B: Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces	3	1	1		1
C: Linear open spaces	1			1	2
D: Amenity green spaces		1			1
H: Provision for children and teenagers	1	7		1	3

*Includes basketball courts, parkour equipment, ping pong/table tennis tables

Play areas were found to cater for children of all ages and offer a wide range of activities; 90% of sites with play cater for under 5s; 94% cater for ages 5-11; and 62.5% cater for 11+. In addition, 85% of the play areas provide space for informal play/ general runabout/ natural play.

Sites with 'other play' provide a range of activities such as trim trails, MUGAs and ping pong tables; some of which are suitable for a wide range of users.

Each site with play has been assigned a playable space hierarchy based upon the age groups provided for. Four of the audited sites had more than one play area, in these cases a hierarchy was applied to the whole site, considering provision across all of the play areas. Other play has been categorised separately, even if it is co-located with other play provision. This is because some sites are not solely for use by children. The categories used are those set out in the Mayor's Shaping Neighbourhoods: Play and Informal Recreation Supplementary Planning Guidance:

- Doorstep playable space - caters only for the under 5s age group;
- Local playable space – caters for the 5-11 age group only or two of the following age groups; under 5s, 5-11, 11+; and

- Neighbourhood playable space - caters for all the following age groups; under 5s, 5-11, 11+.

'Other play' sites have been considered separately to equipped children's play sites.

Based upon the play hierarchy described above, the following playable spaces were recorded over 54 sites:

- 3 doorstep playable spaces
- 18 local playable spaces
- 31 neighbourhood playable spaces

Playable spaces are not evenly distributed across the borough. **Table 6.9** shows the geographic distribution of play sites. Belvedere, Bexleyheath and Sidcup lack Doorstep playable spaces; Welling lacks any Local playable spaces; however, all regions have Neighbourhood playable spaces.

Table 6.9: Playable spaces by Geographic Region

Geographic Region	Doorstep	Local	Neighbourhood
Belvedere		9	6*
Bexleyheath		1	3
Crayford and Old Bexley	1	2	3*
Erith	1	5	6
Sidcup		1	8*
Welling	1		5

*Sites 36, 169 and 223 (Neighbourhood sites) were split over 2 Geographic Regions.

The range of ages groups catered for varies across the borough as shown in **Table 6.10**. Whilst all Geographic Regions have sites that cater for all age groups, Belvedere and Erith in the north of the borough have greater numbers of play sites than other Geographic Regions.

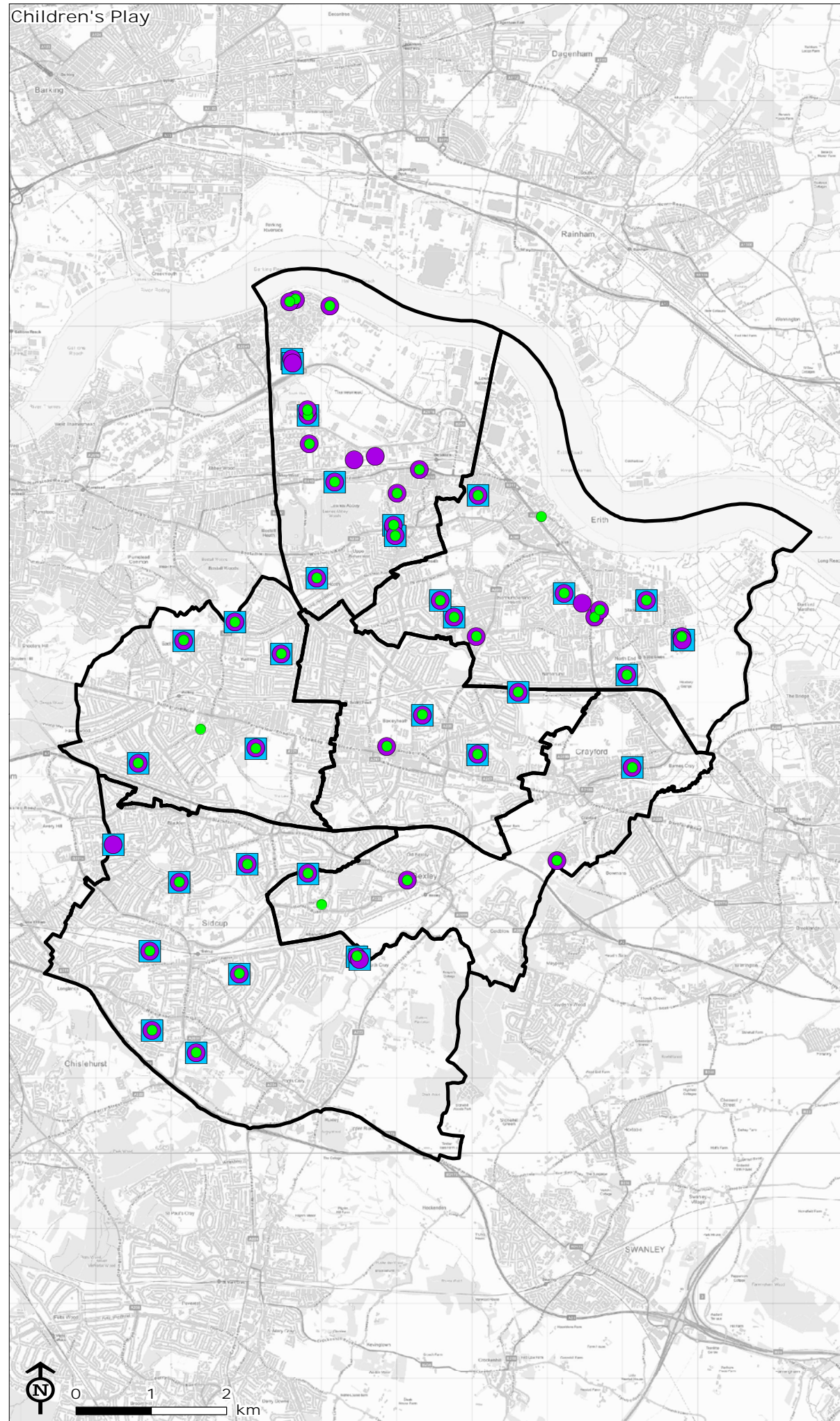
Table 6.10: Ages catered for by play sites by Geographic Region

Geographic Region	Under 5s	5-11	11+
Belvedere	12	16	7
Bexleyheath	4	4	3
Crayford and Old Bexley	5	4	2
Erith	11	12	8
Sidcup	7	9	9
Welling	6	5	5

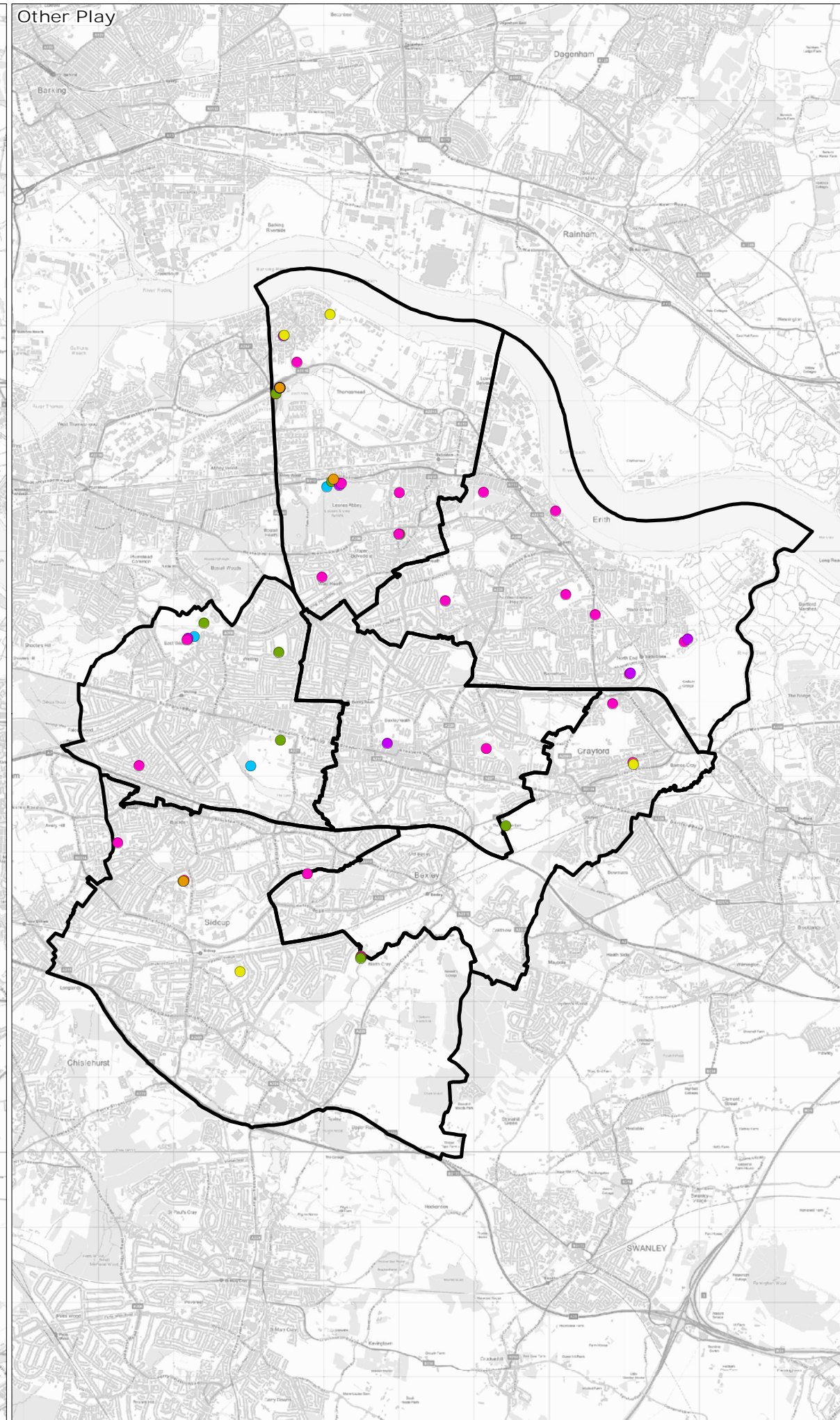
Sport

Over and above the sites with a primary typology of outdoor sports facilities (assessed in **Chapter 7** of this report and shown in **Figure 6.5**), a number of sports facilities were found within open spaces audited as part of the open space assessment. Most of these facilities are in parks and gardens. These sites are all shown in **Figure 6.5**.

Children's Play



Other Play



Bexley Green Infrastructure Study

Figure 6.4: Play sites

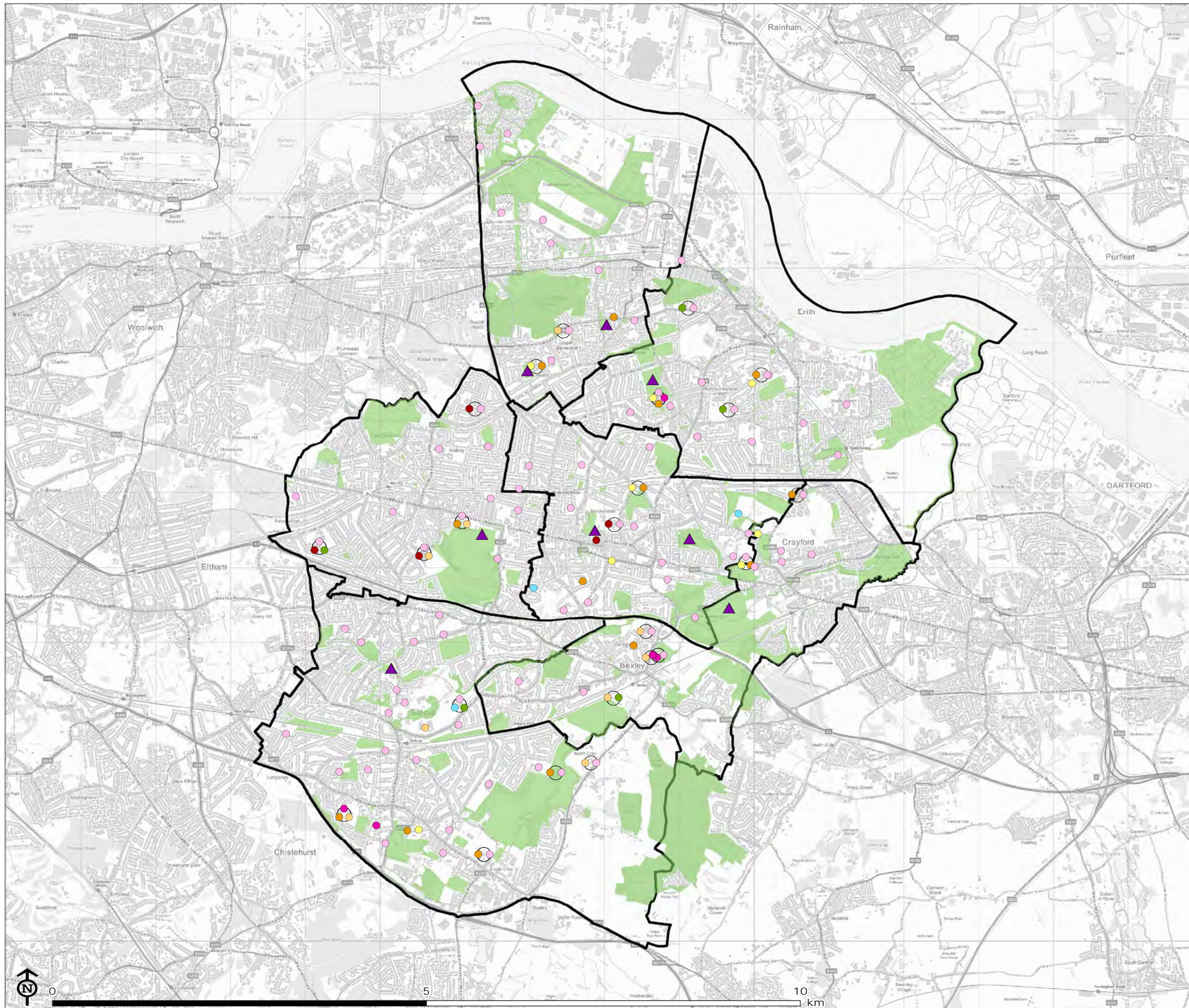
- Geographic regions
- Children's play (left)
 - Under 5s
 - 5 - 11 years
 - 11+ years
- Other play (right)
 - Green gym
 - MUGA
 - Basketball court
 - Parkour equipment
 - Ping pong table
 - Trim trail
 - Wheels park (skate or BMX)



Map Scale @A3: 1:70,000



Figure 6.5: Sports sites



- Geographic regions
- Open space
- Outdoor sports facilities (LUC secondary typology)
- Part 1 (Continuum) sports sites
 - Bowls
 - Cricket
 - Football
 - Golf
 - Hockey
 - Netball
 - Rugby
 - Tennis
 - Single site with multiple sports

Map Scale @A3: 1:50,000



Characteristics of current provision

This section highlights key quality and value audit findings against the Green Flag Award themes. For each question in the audit, a score of 1-3 was given by the assessor representing Poor, Fair and Good quality/condition respectively. A selection of questions have been analysed in detail in this section. The audit scoring system is included in **Appendix C**. Completed site audit forms can be found in **Appendix D**.

The Green Flag themes and a brief description of each are set out below.

Green Flag Award Assessment themes

- **A Welcoming Place** - welcoming, good & safe access, signage, equal access for all
- **Healthy, Safe and Secure** - safe equipment & facilities, personal security, dog fouling, appropriate provision of facilities, quality of facilities
- **Clean and Well Maintained** - litter & waste management, grounds maintenance & horticulture, building & infrastructure maintenance, equipment maintenance
- **Environmental Management** - environmental sustainability, pesticides, peat use, waste minimisation, arboriculture & woodland management
- **Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage** - conservation of nature features, wild flora & fauna, conservation of landscape features, conservation of buildings & structures

- **Community Involvement** - community involvement in management & development including outreach work, appropriate provision for the community
- **Marketing and Communication** - marketing & promotion, provision of appropriate information, provision of appropriate educational interpretation/information
- **Management** - implementation of management plan

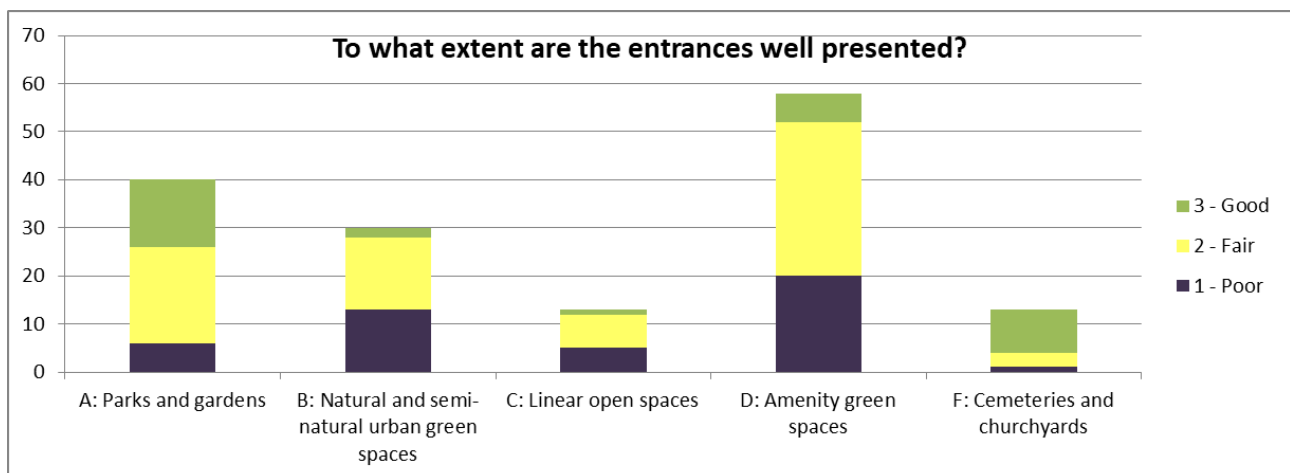
A welcoming place

Entrances

Figure 6.6 shows the spread of scores for audit question: *To what extent are the entrances well presented?*

Parks and gardens provide a wide range of amenities and features for the public and therefore are expected to provide welcoming entrances which are easy to find, with a welcome/advisory sign, an appropriate size, clear, clean, tidy, well maintained and inviting. The results below support this, with parks and gardens scoring well in this category compared to other typologies. For example, Hall Place Gardens provided good welcoming features and high quality signage; this may be attributed in part to the National Lottery grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund which was recently awarded towards maintenance of the site and the Grade I listed Tudor House at this location. Notably, natural and semi-natural urban green spaces, linear open spaces and amenity green spaces have a large proportion of 'poor' or 'fair' scores. Cemeteries and churchyards also scored well against this criterion.

Figure 6.6 To what extent are the entrances well presented?

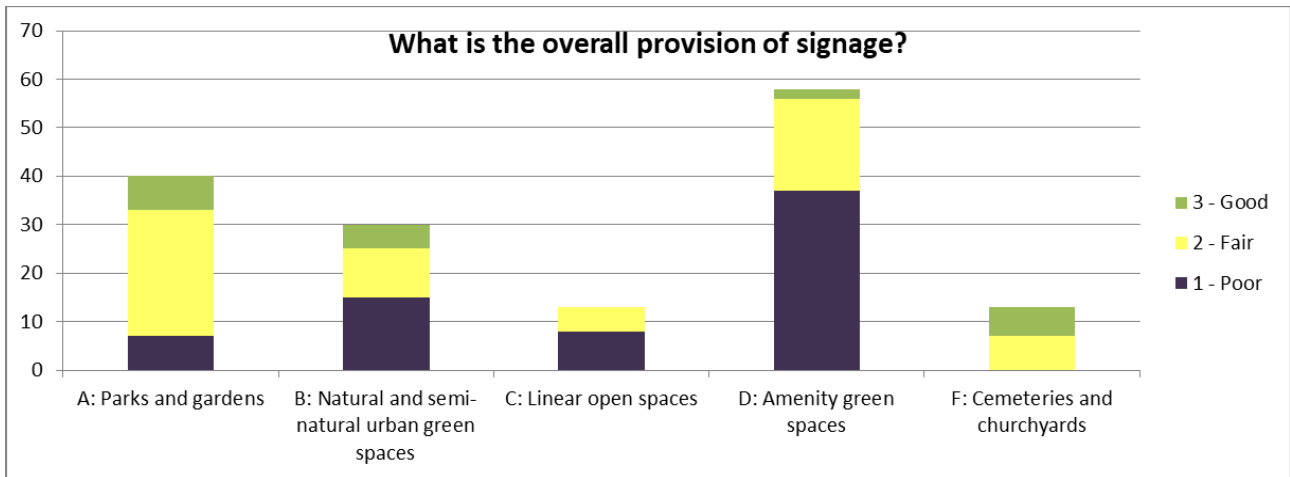


Signage

Figure 6.7 shows the spread of scores for audit question: *What is the overall provision of signage?*

Most parks and gardens, and cemeteries and churchyards score 'good' or 'fair' for provision of signage. However open spaces within the typologies of natural and semi-natural urban green space, amenity green space and linear open spaces were found to have mainly 'poor' provision of signage.

Figure 6.7: What is the overall provision of signage?



Quality of access

Figure 6.8 shows the spread of scores for audit question: *What is the overall quality of access and accesses within and through the open space?*

good safe access, including for elderly and disabled visitors. This explains why parks and gardens and cemeteries and churchyards scored well under this question, with only a small percentage found to have poor quality access/accesses within and through the open space. Amenity green space also scored reasonably well under this question. Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces did not score well for this question.

Parks and gardens, due to their varied landscape and features require careful consideration and compliance with the Equality Act (2010). Cemeteries and churchyards are required to have

Figure 6.8: What is the overall quality of access and accesses within and through the open space?

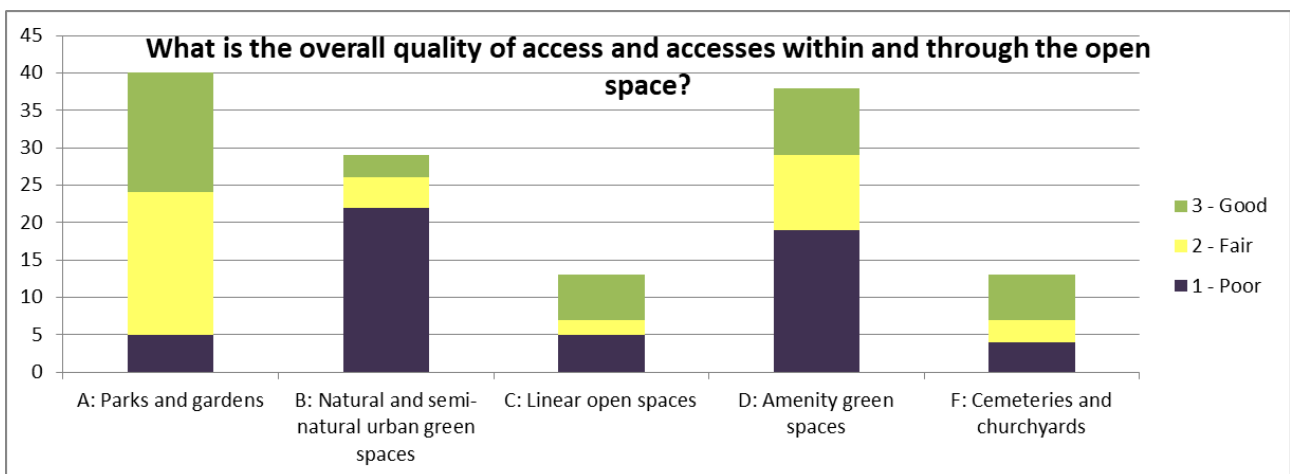


Figure 6.9 provides a snapshot of some of the audit findings against this Green Flag Award theme.

Figure 6.9: A Welcoming place – summary of audit results



Entrances at Shenstone Open Space (left) and Lesnes Abbey Woods (right) are in a good condition and are quite welcoming.



The signage in Hall Place Gardens is clearly displayed and in good condition.

Signage at East Wickham Open Space is faded but contributes to a high level of accessibility at and through this location.



Signage at Parish Woods is missing further information about the park itself and activities which might be supported at this location.

Example of clearly presented and easily readable map in Southmere Park and Lake.



Footpath at the Former Thamesview Golf Course is in poor condition and overgrown in places which acts to restrict access.



Footpaths at Southern Outfall Sewer Linear open space are broad, level, in good condition and contain low level lighting to illuminate and mark the path edges.

Healthy, safe and secure

Figures 6.10 to 6.12 show the spread of scores for audit questions relating to understanding how the open spaces are performing in terms of being healthy, safe and secure. Consideration is given to levels of natural surveillance, whether approaches to the open space feel safe and whether there is adequate self-surveillance within the open space.

As shown in Figure 6.10 parks and gardens and amenity green spaces performed well in terms of sites having natural surveillance from surrounding properties. The opposite was found for natural and semi-natural urban green spaces.

Figure 6.11 shows that overall, most sites have approaches that feel safe and secure. The exception is natural and semi-natural urban green space where the audit showed over half of the site entrances did not feel open and secure.

It is considered important to have a frequent flow of people within open spaces to offer self-surveillance. However, the majority of open spaces within the typologies of natural and semi natural urban green space, linear open spaces, amenity green spaces and cemeteries and churchyards did not perform well against this question – as shown in Figure 6.12.

Figure 6.13 provides a snapshot of some of the audit findings against this Green Flag Award theme.

Figure 6.10: Is there natural surveillance into the site from surrounding properties?

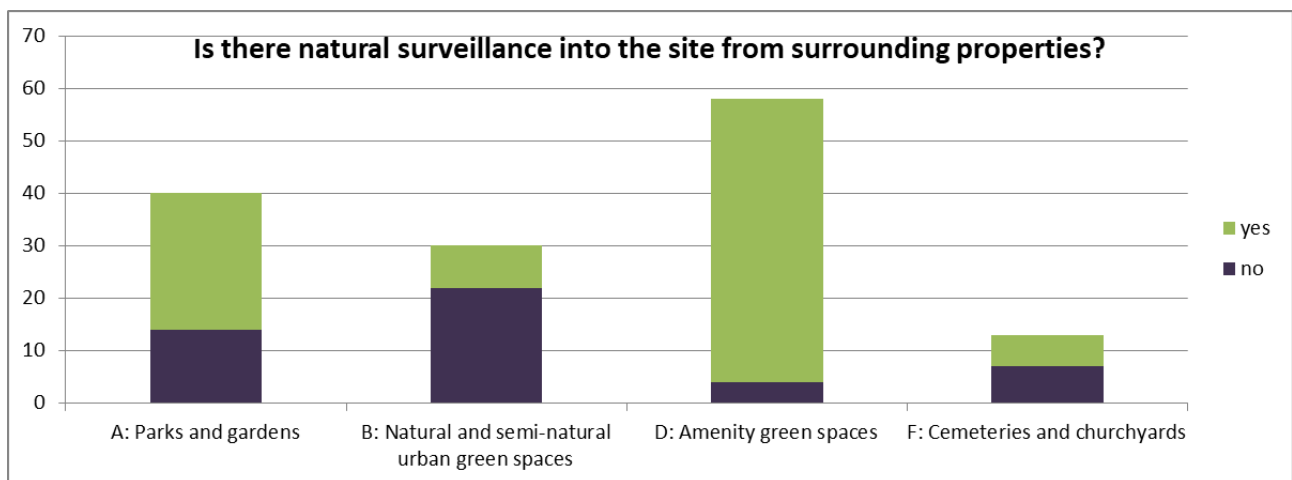


Figure 6.11: Do the approaches feel open and secure?

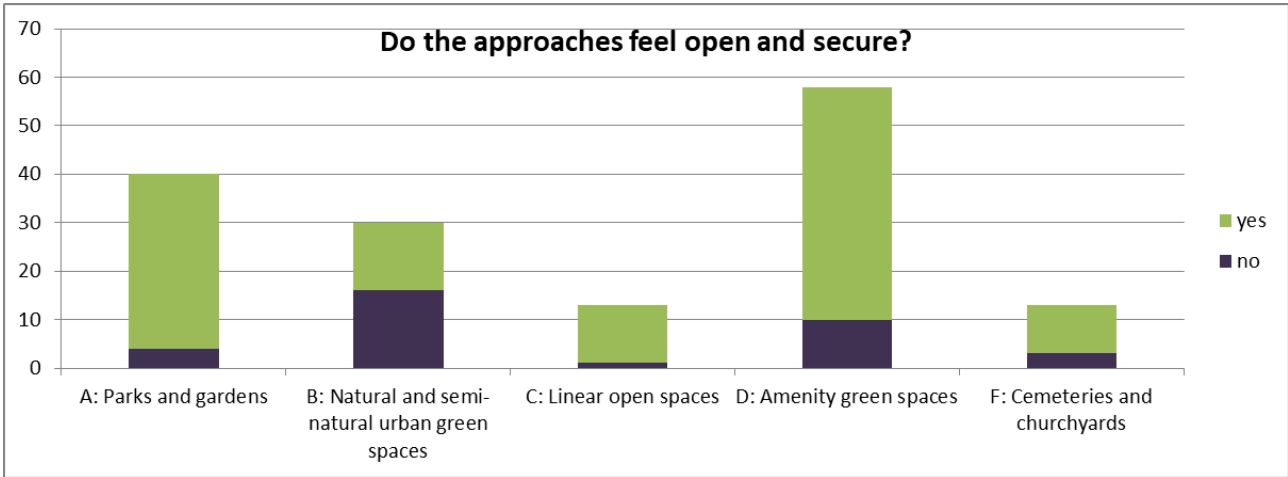


Figure 6.12: Is there a flow of people through the open space (to achieve self-surveillance)?

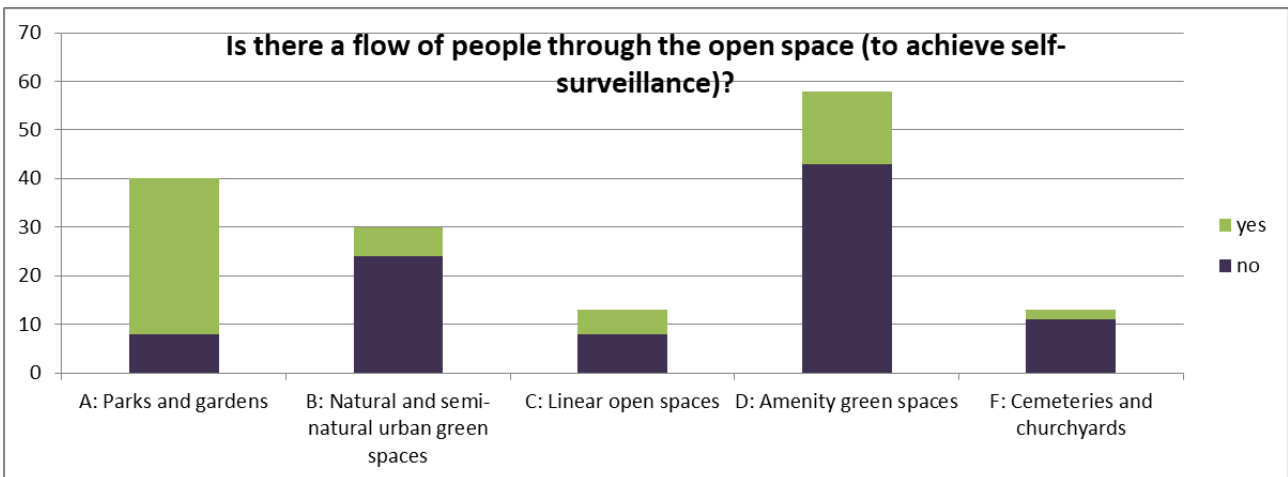


Figure 6.13: Healthy, safe and secure – summary of audit results



Steeple Avenue Memorial Gardens and Highway Land benefit from a degree of natural surveillance from nearby properties and also a flow of people through the open space.



There is little potential for natural surveillance at Crayford Marshes given the lack of nearby residential development.

The overlooking properties at West Street Small Park allow for natural surveillance into the site.



While the amenity green space at Northend Road benefits from natural surveillance, the approach is narrow and overgrown meaning it does not feel open and secure.

Clean and well-maintained

Planted and grass areas

Figures 6.14 and 6.15 show the spread of scores for audit questions: *Overall condition/ quality of planted areas and overall condition/ quality of grass areas.*

Most open spaces within the typologies of parks and gardens, and amenity green spaces contain planted and grass areas are in a 'fair' condition. Parks and gardens and cemeteries and churchyards were identified as the areas which contained the highest proportion of features which were in 'good' condition. It is worth noting that less than half the parks and gardens contained planted areas.

By their nature and the function they perform, it is unsurprising that a very small proportion of natural and semi-natural green urban spaces were identified as containing planted areas. Amenity green spaces were the areas in which the highest proportion of features which were in a 'poor' condition.

Amenity green spaces, parks and gardens and cemeteries and churchyards were by and large found to contain grass areas which were in 'fair' condition. While the highest proportion of parks and gardens were identified as having grass areas which fell within the 'fair' category this typology also contained the highest proportion of grass areas which were identified as being in 'good' condition. Several natural and semi-natural urban green spaces and linear open spaces contain grassed areas found to be in 'poor' condition.

Figure 6.14: Overall condition/quality of planted areas

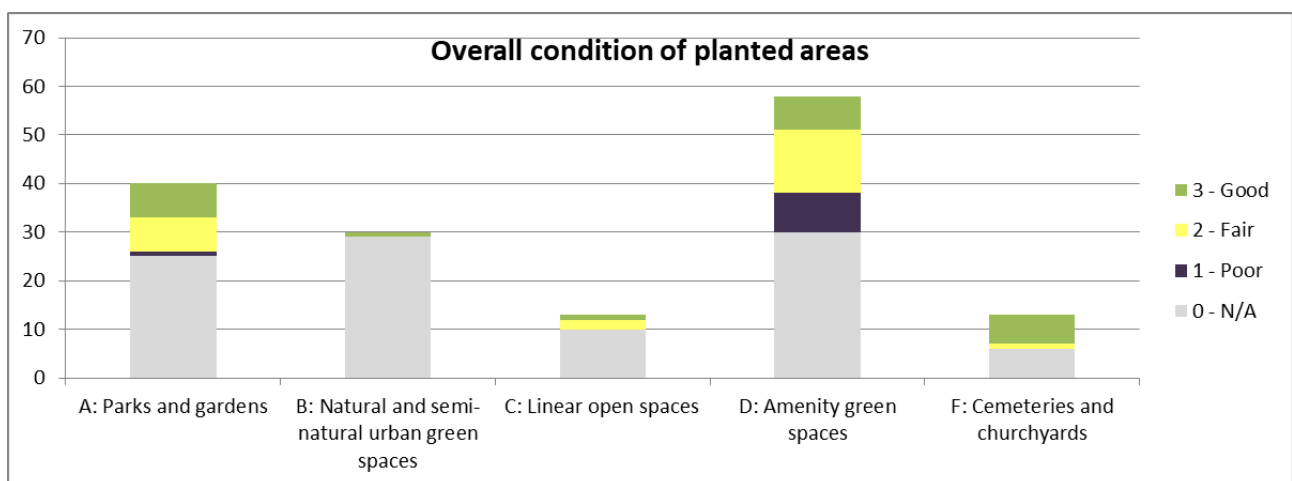
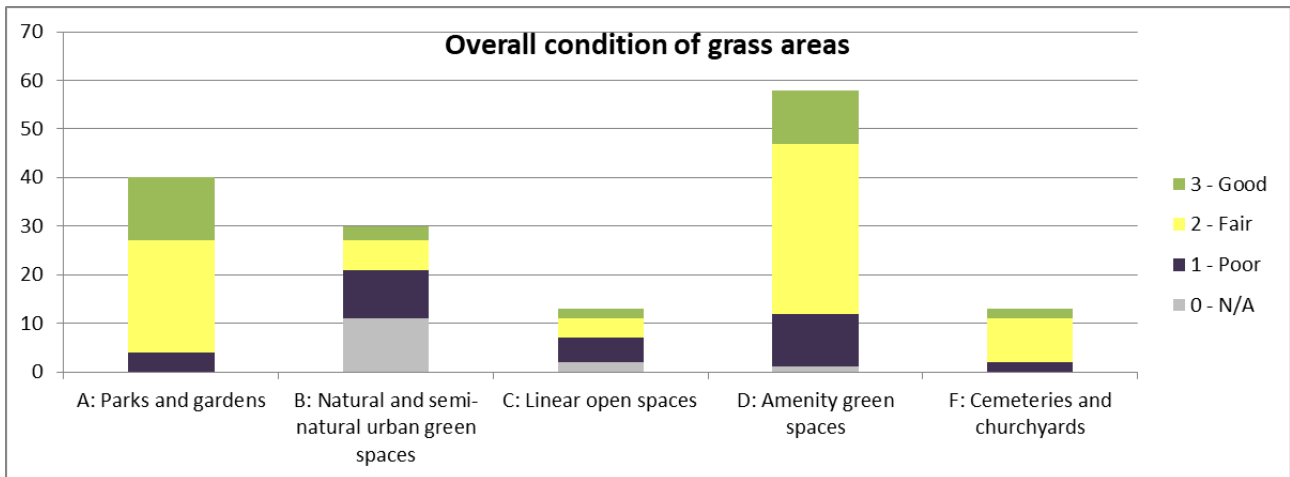


Figure 6.15: Overall condition/quality of grass areas



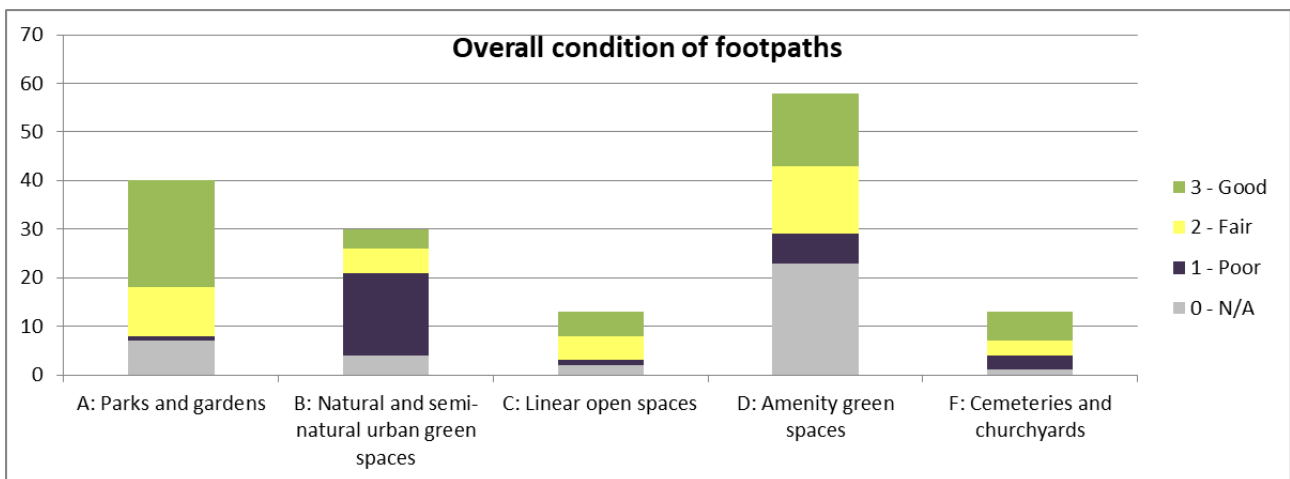
Footpaths

Figure 6.16 shows the spread of scores for audit question: Overall condition/ quality of footpaths.

Overall, footpaths in most open spaces are in 'good' or 'fair' condition apart from footpaths within natural and semi-natural

urban green spaces. Notably, most footpaths in parks and gardens have footpaths which are in 'good' condition. Footpaths within natural and semi-natural urban green spaces are mostly considered to be in 'poor' condition. The condition of footpaths in these open spaces may restrict access.

Figure 6.16: Overall condition/quality of footpaths



Buildings

Figure 6.17 shows the spread of scores for audit question: Overall condition/ quality of buildings.

The majority of buildings located within the borough's open spaces are considered to be in a 'good' or 'fair' condition. All buildings within cemeteries and churchyards in Bexley were found to be in 'good' condition. Several buildings in parks and

gardens contain buildings which were found to be in 'fair' condition.

Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces show a mix of building condition with a little over half in 'good' condition and the rest 'poor'. The condition and functionality of buildings in

open spaces can have a significant impact on how people perceive the safety of an open space. It is therefore vital that all park buildings are well-maintained and actively used.

Figure 6.18 provides a snapshot of some of the audit findings against this Green Flag Award theme.

Figure 6.17: Overall condition/quality of buildings

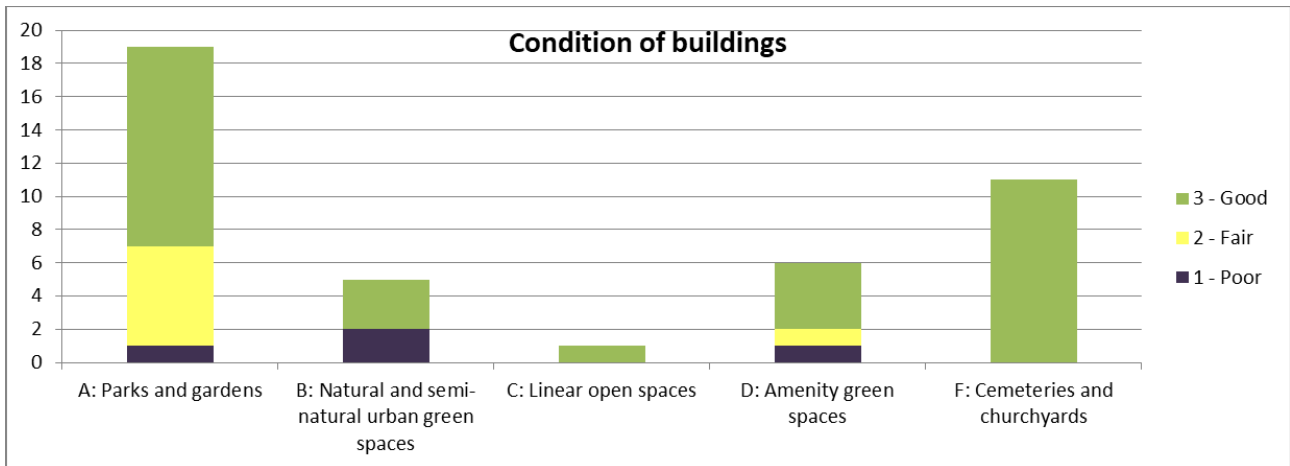


Figure 6.18: Clean and well-maintained – summary of audit results



Planting at St Paulinus Church is in relatively good condition.



Weeds are evident within the planting beds at The Glade.



Grass is worn and contains weeds at Berwick Crescent Open Space.



Grass heavily worn at Slade Green Recreation Ground.



The footpath in Hall Place Gardens ends abruptly.



The footpath is level, well defined and maintained from the grassed areas in Russell Park.



Evidence of graffiti at Old Farm Park (West).



Disused building at Longlands Recreation Ground.

Environmental management

Figure 6.19 shows the spread of scores for audit question: *Evidence of sustainable management practices.*

The audit revealed that there is very little evidence of sustainable management practices within the borough's open spaces. A large proportion of sites are situated such that they

can perform a role in absorbing noise or air pollution from nearby traffic.

The council's term grounds contractor, who undertake grounds maintenance operations throughout the borough (including cleansing operations) do work to a specification that dictates that litter collected should be sorted and recycled at the Council's disposal site. In addition, all green waste

generated from maintenance operations is taken the disposal site for processing.

Therefore, the Council does have processes in place for sustainable management, this may not be visible on site for

example with compost heaps – but this process is in place but carried out on a larger commercial scale off site.

Figure 6.20 provides a snapshot of some of the audit findings against this Green Flag Award theme.

Figure 6.19: Evidence of sustainable management practices

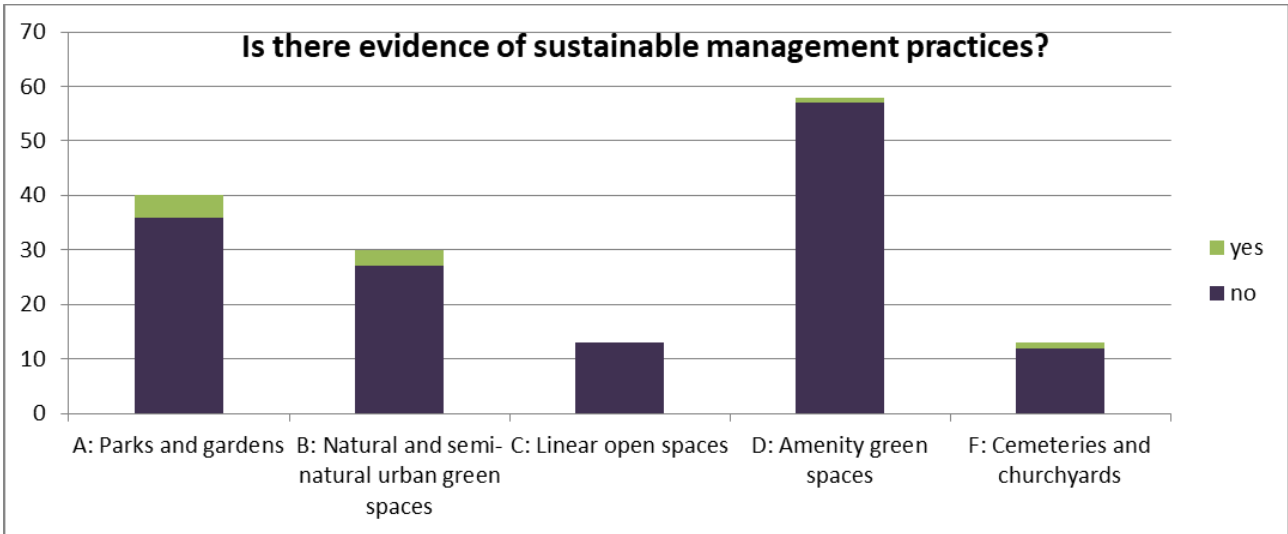


Figure 6.20: Environmental management – summary of audit results



Noticeboard at Danson Park with details of Forestry Commission pest control measures.



Composting facilities at Crossway Park

Biodiversity, landscape and heritage

Figure 6.21 shows the spread of scores for audit question: *Evidence that natural features are being managed for nature conservation.*

Evidence that natural features are being managed for nature conservation was most prevalent within parks and gardens

and natural and semi-natural urban green spaces. There was no evidence that natural features are being managed for nature conservation within linear open spaces in Bexley, with very few amenity green spaces and cemeteries and churchyards scoring positively against this question.

Figure 6.22

provides a snapshot of some of the audit findings against this Green Flag Award theme.

Figure 6.21: Evidence that natural features are being managed for nature conservation

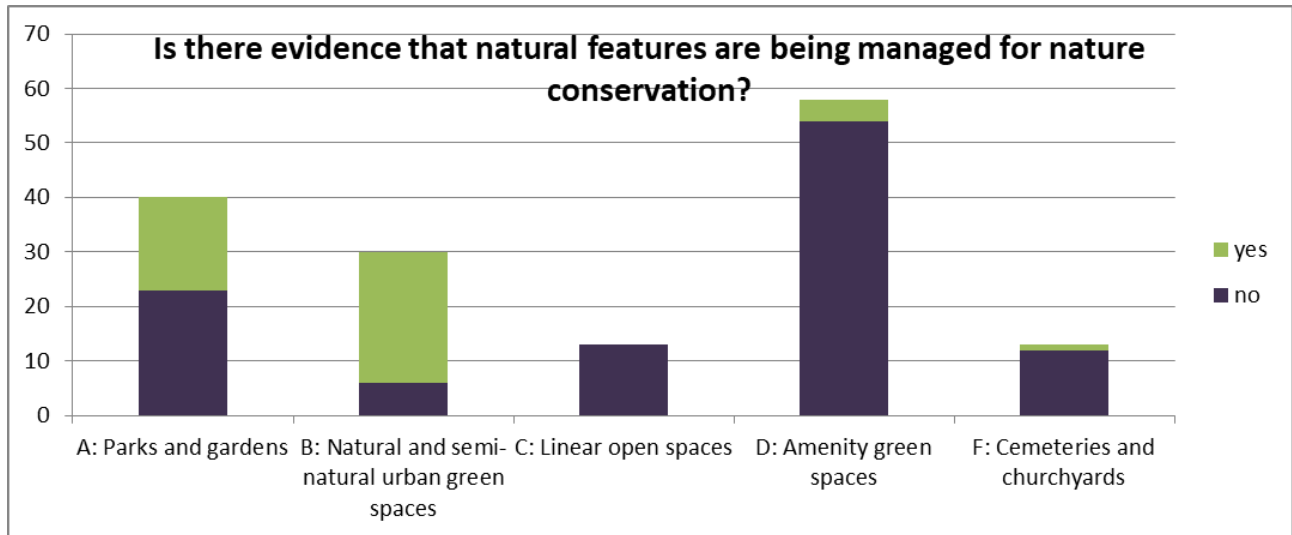


Figure 6.22: Biodiversity, landscape and heritage – summary of audit results



Signage detailing tree planting scheme at Abbey Hill Park.



Bird watching hide and evidence of different vegetation types at Erith Marshes (Part) North.

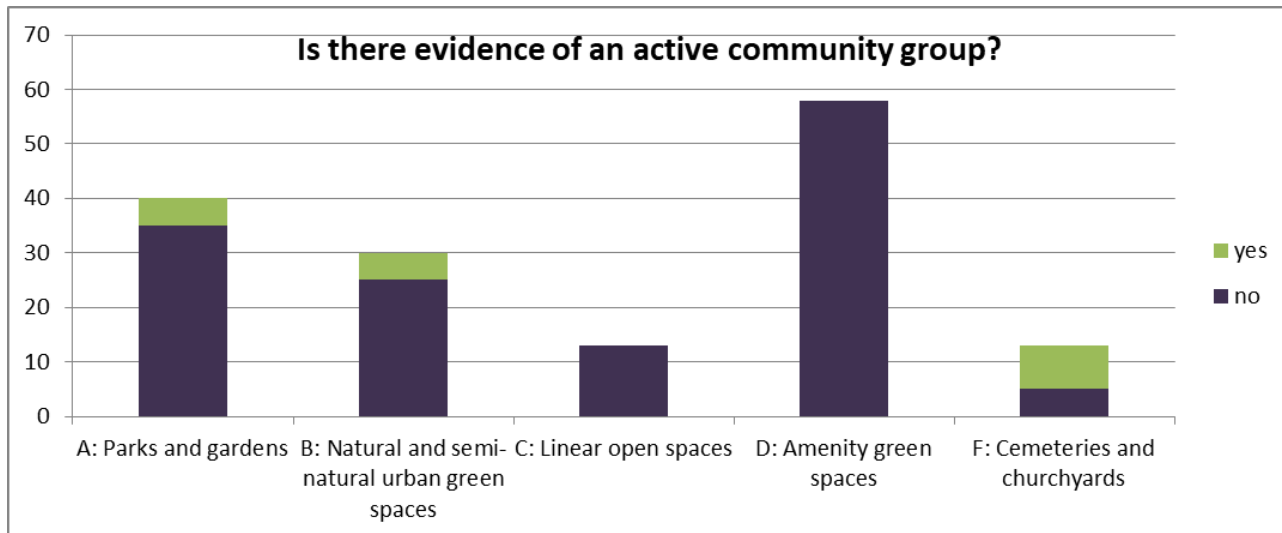
Community involvement

Figure 6.23 shows the spread of scores for audit question: *Is there evidence of an active community group?*

The audit found evidence of 18 active community groups in the borough's open spaces (excluding allotments). Most

community groups are associated with cemeteries and churchyards. Smaller numbers of parks and gardens and natural and semi-natural urban green spaces are supported by a community group. It should also be noted that some sports sites are managed by community sports clubs.

Figure 6.23: Is there evidence of an active community group?



Noticeboards

Figure 6.24 shows the spread of scores for audit question: *Is there a public noticeboard on site?*

The majority of cemeteries and churchyards have permanent noticeboards, with smaller numbers found in parks and gardens and natural and semi-natural urban green space. No

evidence was found of public noticeboards within any of the amenity green spaces or linear open spaces in the borough. Of the 18 sites that were found to have permanent noticeboards, 16 displayed up to date information.

Figure 6.25 provides a snapshot of some of the audit findings against this Green Flag Award theme.

Figure 6.24: Is there a permanent public noticeboard on site?

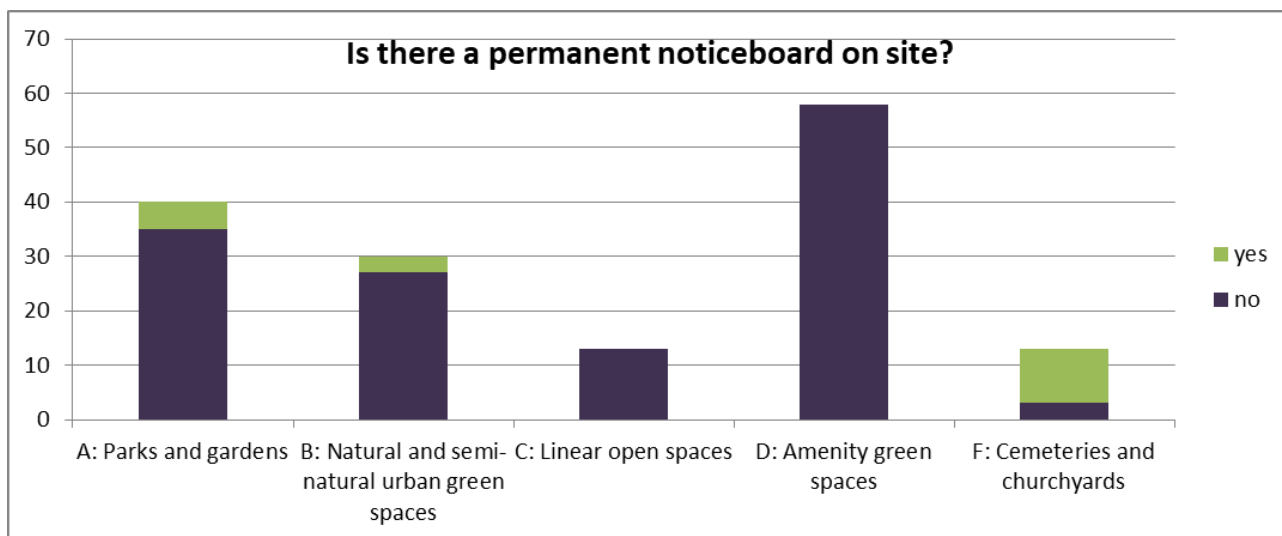


Figure 6.25: Community involvement – summary of audit results



Signage and community noticeboard at Foots Cray Meadows.



Sidcup Community Garden at Sidcup Place Open Space.



Some noticeboards are in poor condition and do not contain information.



Noticeboard at Riverside Gardens (South) detailing community involvement at the park.

Marketing, communication and culture

Figure 6.26 shows the spread of scores for audit question: *Does the open space contain public art?* Figure 6.27 shows the spread of scores for audit question: *Is there a programme of cultural or other community activities?*

Few of the borough's open spaces contain public art. There were some installations in parks and gardens. A small number of natural and semi-natural urban green spaces and

linear open spaces (a total of two and one respectively) were also identified as containing public art.

Programmes of cultural or other community activities are most evident at cemeteries and churchyards with a limited number found in parks and gardens and natural and semi-natural urban green spaces.

Figure 6.28 provides a snapshot of some of the audit findings against this Green Flag Award theme.

Figure 6.26: Does the open space contain public art?

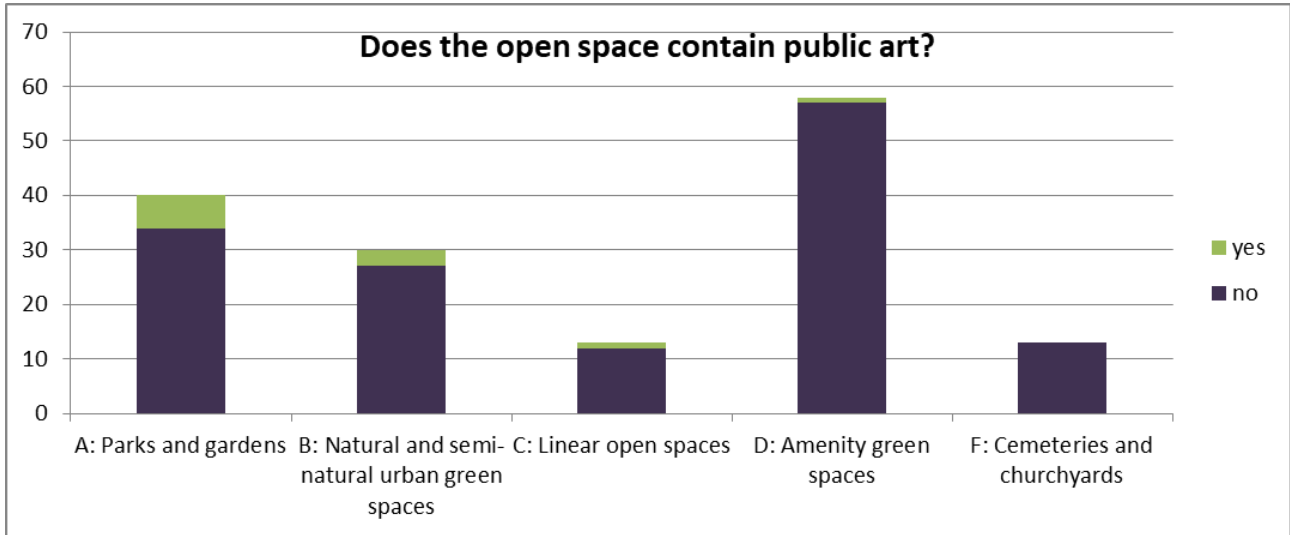


Figure 6.27: Is there a programme of cultural or other community activities?

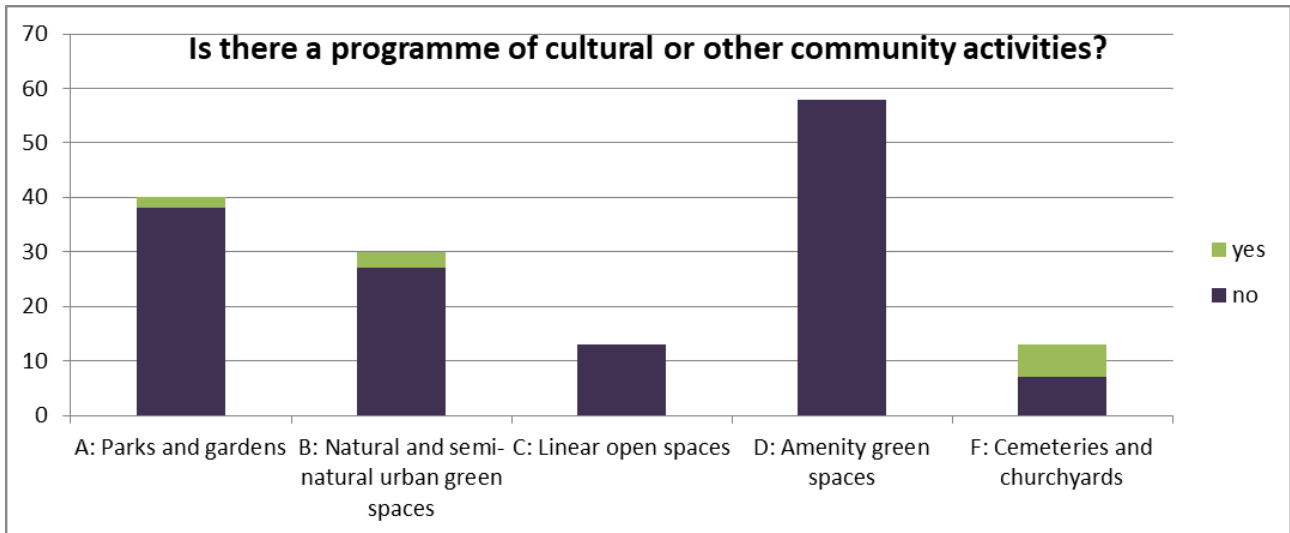


Figure 6.28: Marketing and culture



Poster for a volunteer nature conservation programmes at the Former Gun Club Site.



The site of the scheduled monument at Lesnes Abbey Woods



Example of public art at Burstled Woods.

Play facilities

There is play provision for all age groups in Bexley. Of the 54 individual play areas audited, 45 had play provision for under

5s, 50 had play provision for 5-11 year olds and 34 had play provision for ages 11+. The condition of play equipment by age group is shown in **Figure 6.29** with a snapshot of some examples shown in **Figure 6.30**.

Overall, most play areas achieved a 'good' rating for the condition of play equipment. On average, there are around 12 pieces of play equipment per play area, with some having up to 26 pieces. 91% of play areas audited had impact absorbing surfaces around the equipment. 94% had benches within the enclosure. 93% had litter bins within the enclosure. 74% had notice boards at the entrance stating that they were dog free, children only and provided emergency contact numbers. 85% had space, separate from the equipped area for informal play/general runabout.

Figure 6.29: Condition of play equipment by age category

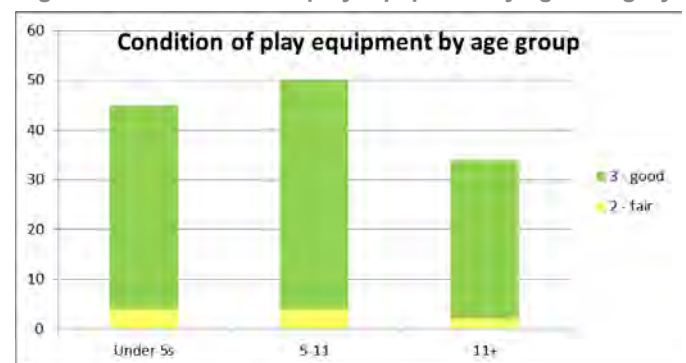


Figure 6.30: Play sites in Bexley



Signage at Boundary Street Playground.



Play equipment at Waring Park.



Play equipment at Town Park.



Climbing frameworks at Southmere Park and Lake.

Of the 10 green gyms and 3 trim trails surveyed, all were found to be in 'good' condition. The vast majority of MUGAs were also found to be in 'good' condition, with only 20% in 'fair' condition. Half of the wheels parks were in 'fair' condition, with the other half in 'good' condition.

Other facilities identified include basketball, ping pong and parkour equipment; all of which was found to be in good condition. The breakdown of the condition of other play provision is provided in **Table 6.11** and some examples are shown in **Figure 6.31**.

Table 6.11: Condition of other play provision in Bexley

Other play provision	2 - fair	3 - good	Total
Green gyms		10	10
MUGA	4	17	21
Trim trail		3	3
Wheels park	3	3	6

Other play provision	2 - fair	3 - good	Total
Other	1	7	8
Total	8	40	48

Figure 6.31: Teen provision in Bexley



Green gym at Binsey Walk linear open space.



Basketball hoop and MUGA at The Dell.



MUGA at Northumberland Heath Recreation Ground.



MUGA at West Heath Recreation Ground.

Allotments

A total of 34 allotment sites were audited in the borough¹¹². The vast majority (26) of allotment sites were identified as being in 'good' condition. The remaining seven sites were identified as being in 'fair' condition with no sites identified as being in 'poor' condition.

Bexley has an up-to-date allotment asset management plan for 2017/18¹¹³. This plan highlights that the 35 sites have a current user base of over 1,700 tenants. 30 sites are managed by the council, with five sites being administered by site

management committees operating to the Council under a delegated licence agreement. These five sites not managed in house have 566 plots, of which 530 are tenanted. The 30 sites managed by the council provide 1,449 plots of varying sizes with 1,287 plots currently tenanted. While the Allotment Asset Management Plan notes that there are around 100 people currently waiting for an allotment in the borough, recent figures from the council indicate that there 67 people currently on their waiting list with 140 plots vacant at present.

The allotment plots have a cultivation survey generally twice a year. Most of the sites have a nominated representative from

¹¹² It was not possible to gain access to Coldblow allotments

¹¹³ Bexley Allotment Asset Management Plan 2017-18

the Allotment Federation and they carry out the surveys. The Allotment & Open Spaces Manager carries out follow up surveys if tenants dispute the findings.

Contingent with the Council's Asset Management Plan process a review of the buildings within allotments was carried out in 2010. This was achieved by undertaking a suitability and condition survey of the properties. They were assessed using a detailed assessment matrix and all sites containing buildings in the borough were visited. The assessment measured each building against criteria relevant to their respective typology (such as the condition of the provision, construction type, accessibility, utility supplies, security and image) to provide an indication of their quality and potential areas for improvement.

The survey identified examples of good provision and some properties where there are opportunities for improvement or rationalisation. The assessment also showed that not all properties are occupied, and a number are either derelict or in poor condition. 15 sites have buildings, and there are 32 buildings in total.

Fully occupied sites encourage and provide an improved environment for crop cultivation. A reduction in vacant, overgrown plots reduces the risk and spread of unwanted weed, pest and diseases. Full occupation also maximises rental income potential to the Council.

Summary of feedback from public consultation

The Mayor's guidance on open space assessments recommends taking an inclusive approach to understanding demand and need. Community consultation is a useful way to inform the evidence base on need and demand including:

- Local people's attitudes to existing provision.
- Local expectations and needs which are currently 'invisible' because there is no current provision.
- A qualitative 'vision' for the type of open space facilities communities want to see in their areas.

Public consultation was undertaken through online consultation as publicised through the Council's various media platforms and circulated to relevant park friends and other community groups. Paper copies were also made available if requested. The scope of this questionnaire covered the frequency of use, perceived satisfaction with the quality and quantity of open spaces, green infrastructure and sports facilities in the borough. Questions on specialist open space

provision such as allotments and play were also included. In addition, a confidential section on the profile of the respondent was included, to enable us to ensure that the survey captured responses from a reasonable sample of the borough's population. A full copy of the responses is included in **Appendix E**.

Breakdown of respondents

- The survey was live for 5 weeks (5th March 2018 – 8th April 2018) and there were 788 responses: 59% female, 40% male and 1% other.
- 1% of respondents were under 24 years of age, with the majority of responses (44%) coming from the 40-59 year age category.
- 90% of respondents were residents of the borough, with the remainder of respondents living outside of the borough but working in Bexley or regularly making use of its parks and open spaces. The largest number of respondents were from postcode district DA15 (Sidcup) and DA7 (Bexleyheath). DA14 (Sidcup), DA8 (Erith), DA5, (Bexley) DA16 (Welling) and DA17 (Belvedere) were also well represented. A breakdown of respondents by post towns in order of number respondents is as follows¹¹⁴:
 - Sidcup (DA15) – 128
 - Bexleyheath (DA7) – 118
 - Sidcup (DA14) – 91
 - Erith (DA8) -86
 - Welling (DA16) - 82
 - Bexley (DA5) – 63
 - Belvedere (DA17) – 51
 - Bexleyheath (DA6) – 38
- This breakdown of responses received shows that a good geographical spread of responses has been received. The responses are split reasonably evenly between those residents to the north of the A2 (341 residents) and those living to the south (370 residents).
- Whilst there were responses from people of several ethnicities, the majority of those who responded consider themselves White British (89% of all responses). Considering that the most recent demographic information for the borough shows that 22.0% of the

¹¹⁴ Only post town areas from which ten or more responses have been received are included

Bexley population is made up of black and minority ethnic groups¹¹⁵, it is possible that there is an underrepresentation of views from this part of the community.

Quality and quantity of open space

- 86% of respondents are very satisfied (25%) or fairly satisfied (61%) with the quality of parks and open spaces in Bexley. 6% are very or fairly dissatisfied with the quality. Further breakdown of how respondents feel about the quality of open space and parks in Bexley is presented in **Table 6.12** below.

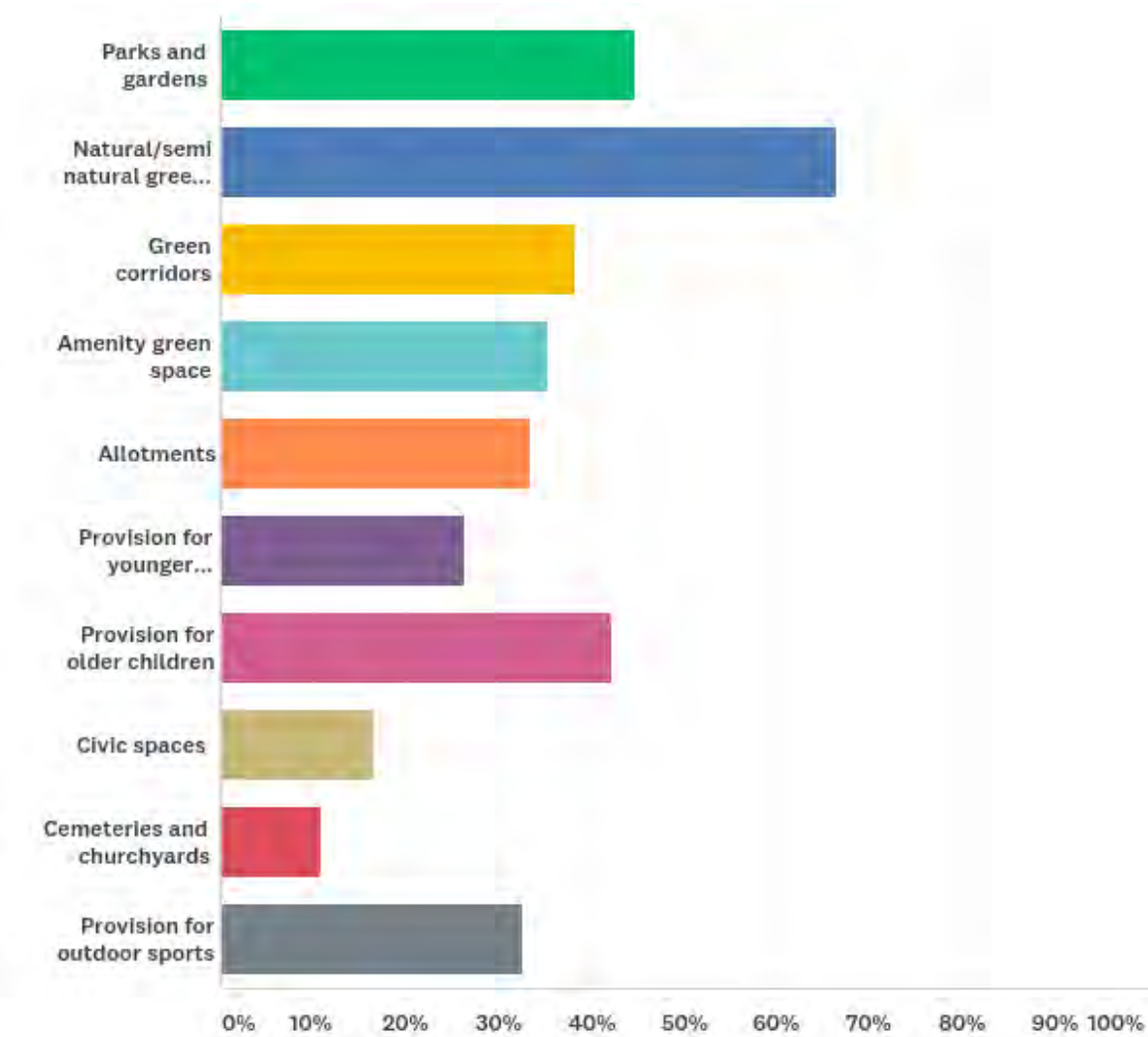
Table 6.12: Breakdown of respondents' satisfaction with quality of parks and open spaces in Bexley

Satisfaction with quality of parks and open spaces	Number of respondents(percentage)
Very satisfied	144 (25.35%)
Fairly satisfied	348 (61.27%)
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	40 (7.04%)
Fairly dissatisfied	25 (4.40%)
Very dissatisfied	9 (1.58%)
Don't know	2 (0.35%)

- Sites are used for a number of different purposes, the majority of users listing walking as their main reason, followed by to observe wildlife and to rest and relax.
- Many respondents stated that the most important aspect for the borough to focus on in the future is maintaining cleaning standards (litter and bins). Other ideal characteristics at parks and open spaces which are of noted importance to the those who completed the survey included maintenance of flowers, trees and shrubs, maintenance of grass, maintenance of footpaths, the provision of acceptable parking facilities, good quality outdoor sport facilities and provision of natural features.
- Of those people who reported having safety concerns in parks and open spaces in the borough, potential improvements to address this issue which were the most important included better lighting, ensuring that the route to the open space in question is overlooked and clearly visible, and on-site security/CCTV.
- 66% of respondents felt that there is a need for more areas of natural and semi-natural green space in Bexley. It was also reported by a large proportion (44%) of respondents that of the open space typologies considered, more parks and gardens should be provided. The public survey also identified that respondents felt that more linear open spaces (38%) and amenity green space (35%) may be required in the borough. Provision for older children was also highlighted as being an area of perceived need. A further breakdown of the responses received relating to the perceived need for different typologies of open space is provided in **Figure 6.32**.

¹¹⁵ <https://bexleyjsna.co.uk>

Figure 6.32: The perceived need for different typologies of open space in Bexley

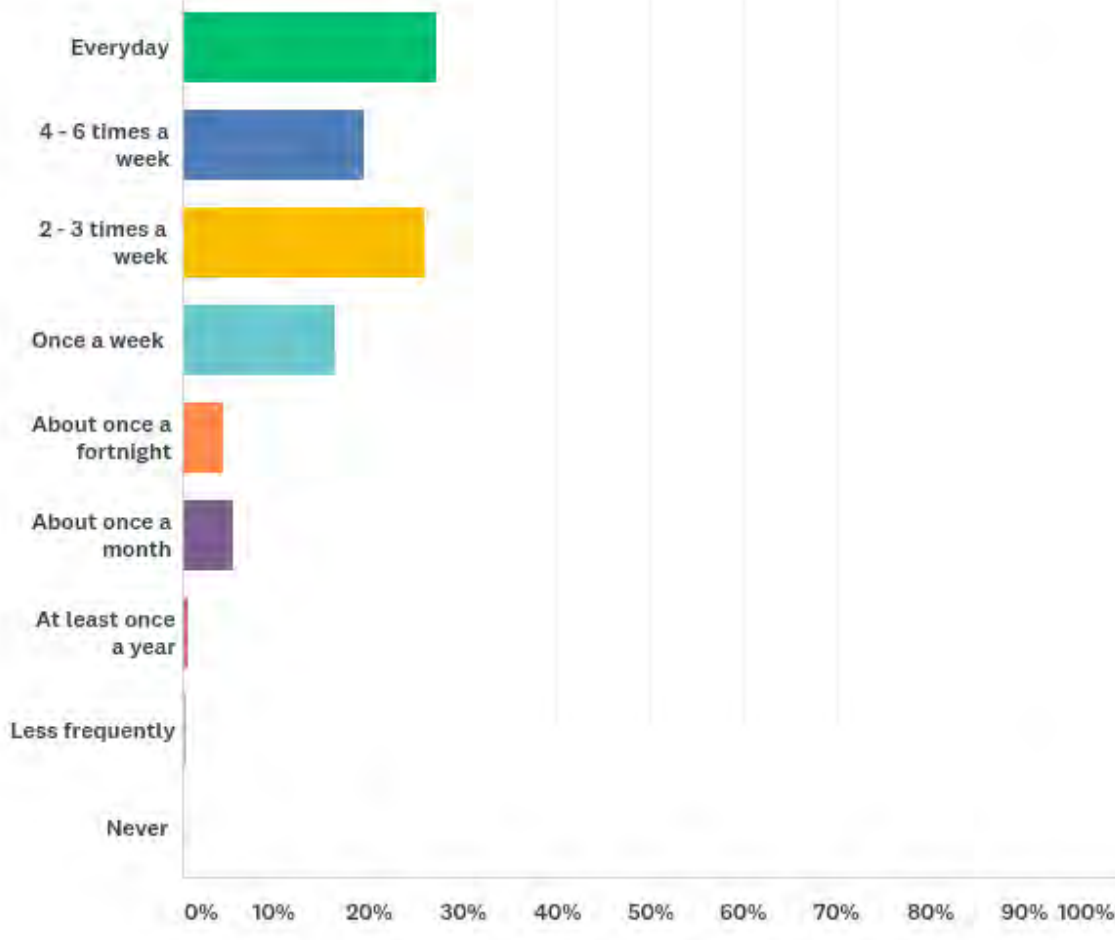


Accessibility to open space

- Most respondents (89%) visit a park or open space at least once a week. A further breakdown of how often respondents to the survey make use of open spaces in Bexley is provided in **Figure 6.33**. Of those who don't

use parks or open spaces, or use them very infrequently, concerns over lack of facilities (including bins, toilets and benches) was the reason most frequently given. A similar number of respondents highlighted issues relating to litter, anti-social behaviour or the appearance of the open space or park.

Figure 6.33: Accessibility to open space

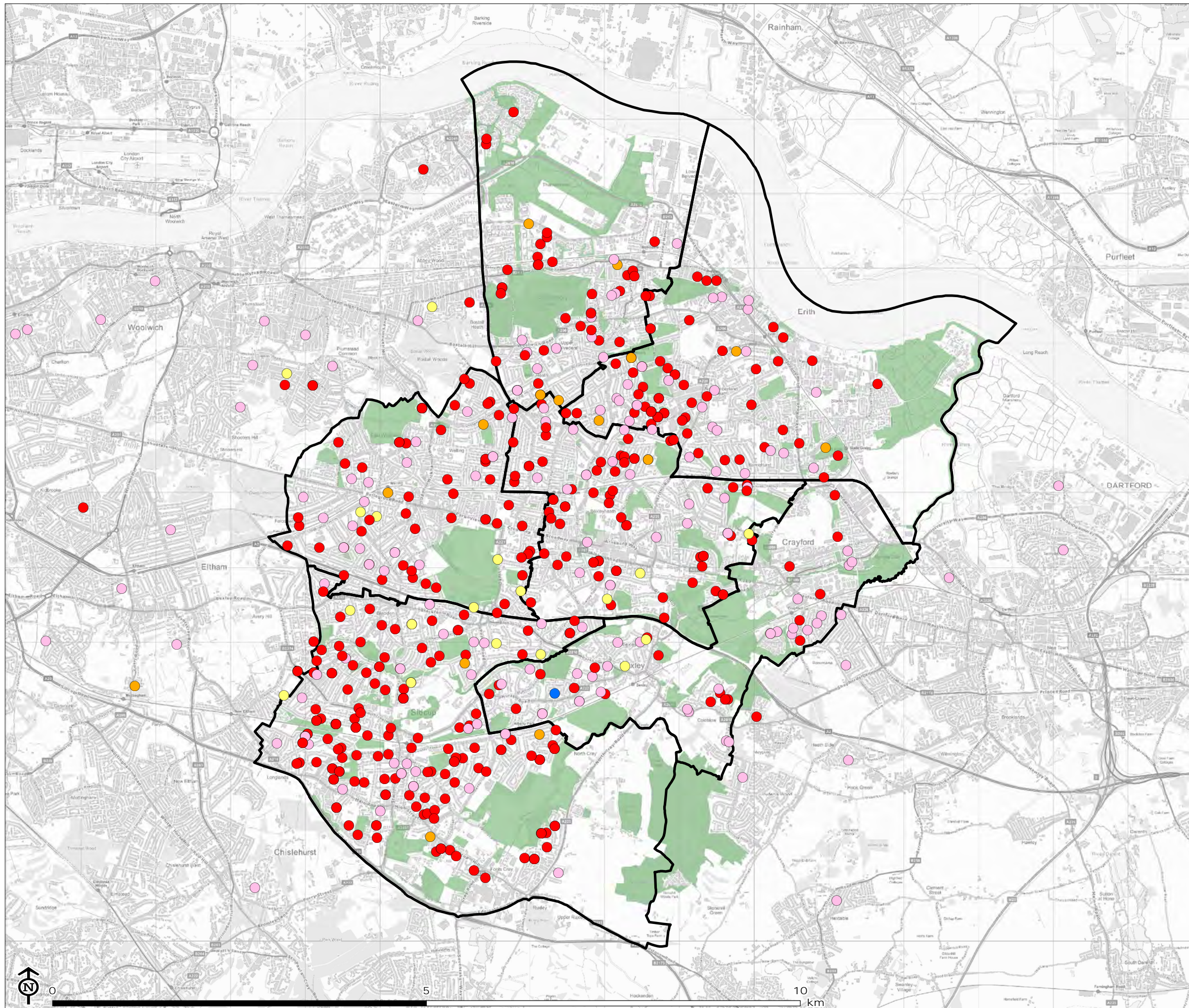


- The parks and open spaces within Bexley visited most often by respondents are Danson Park, Hall Place Gardens, Foots Cray Meadows and Bexley Woods.
- 62% of respondents travel on foot to the park or open space they visit the most for most of their journey. 30% travel by car or motorbike with a small proportion of respondents travelling by public transport (4%) or by bicycle (3%). This is shown spatially in **Figure 6.34**.
- Of all respondents to the survey, 29% can reach the park or open space they visit the most in under 5 minutes. 60% can reach the park or open space they visit the most in less than 10 minutes and 83% are within 15 minutes. The spread of responses is shown in **Figure 6.35**. It is interesting to note that some respondents who have highlighted longer travel times to the park or open space they visit most often appear to

live in relatively close proximity to an open space, implying that they are not using their local park or open space as frequently. There is a cluster of longer travel times in the middle of the borough. Within Crayford and Old Bexley, most respondents stated that they travel less than 15 minutes to get to the park or open space they visit most frequently. In Sidcup, travel times are also on the lower end of the scale, with a small percentage travelling up to 20 minutes.

Bexley Green Infrastructure Study

Figure 6.34: Mode of transport used to access open space



Geographic regions

Open space

What mode of transport do you use for the majority of your journey when going to the park or open space you visit most?

By bicycle

By bus

By car

By train

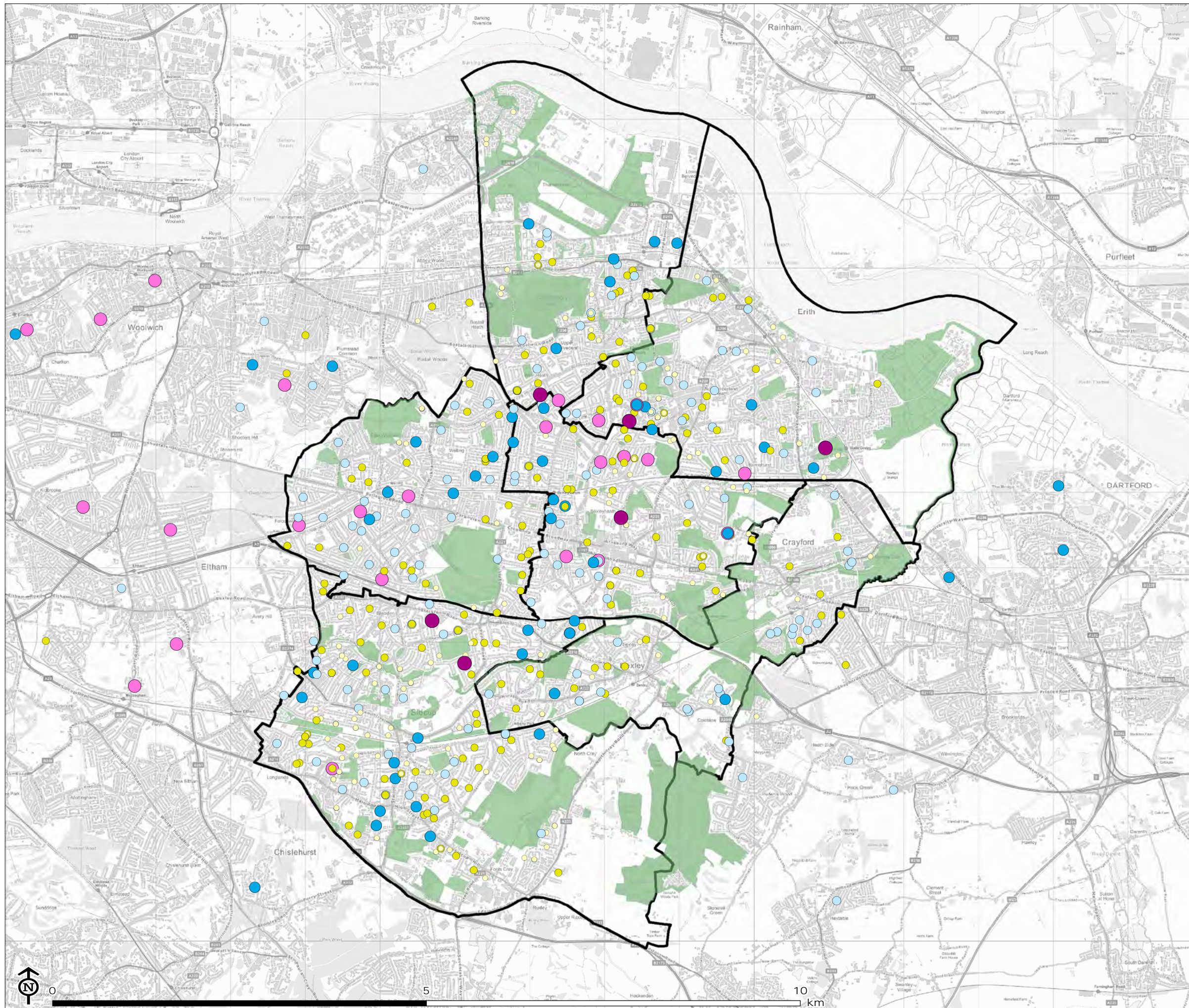
On foot

Map Scale @A3: 1:50,000



Bexley Green Infrastructure Study

Figure 6.35: Travel time to open space



Geographic regions

Open space

How long does it take you to travel to the park or open space you visit most?

- Less than 5 minutes
- Between 5 - 10 minutes
- Between 10 - 15 minutes
- Between 15 - 20 minutes
- Between 20 - 30 minutes
- Over 30 minutes

Map Scale @A3: 1:50,000



Play

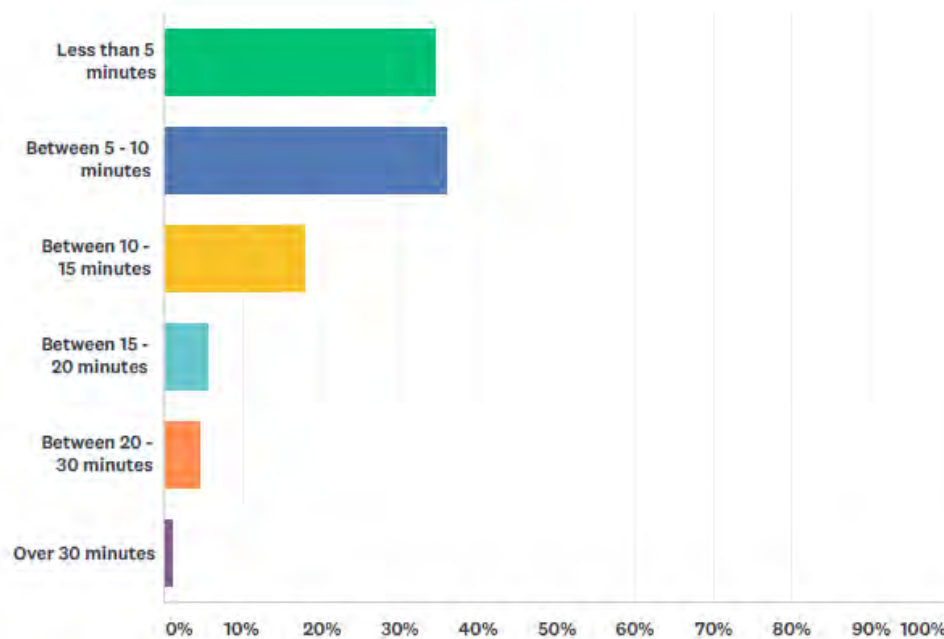
- 44% of respondents gave 'use of play equipment' as one of their main reasons for visiting a park or open space.
- The questions in relation to play equipment in the borough were split between play equipment for children under five and play equipment for children aged five to eleven. The findings for these groups were broadly similar with 21% of respondents very satisfied with the quality of play equipment for children under five and 17% of respondents reportedly very satisfied with the quality of play equipment for children between five and eleven. 41% of respondents were fairly satisfied with the quality of play equipment for both groups. Only 1% reported being very dissatisfied with the quality of play equipment for both groups, while 8% reported being fairly dissatisfied with the quality of play equipment for children under five, and 11% reported being fairly dissatisfied with quality of play equipment for children between five and eleven.
- In relation to outdoor facilities for young people aged 12 and over, only 3% of respondents were very satisfied with current the quality of provision and 13% of respondents were fairly satisfied with the quality of

current provision. 13% of those who responded reported that they were very dissatisfied while 21% stated that they were fairly dissatisfied.

Allotments

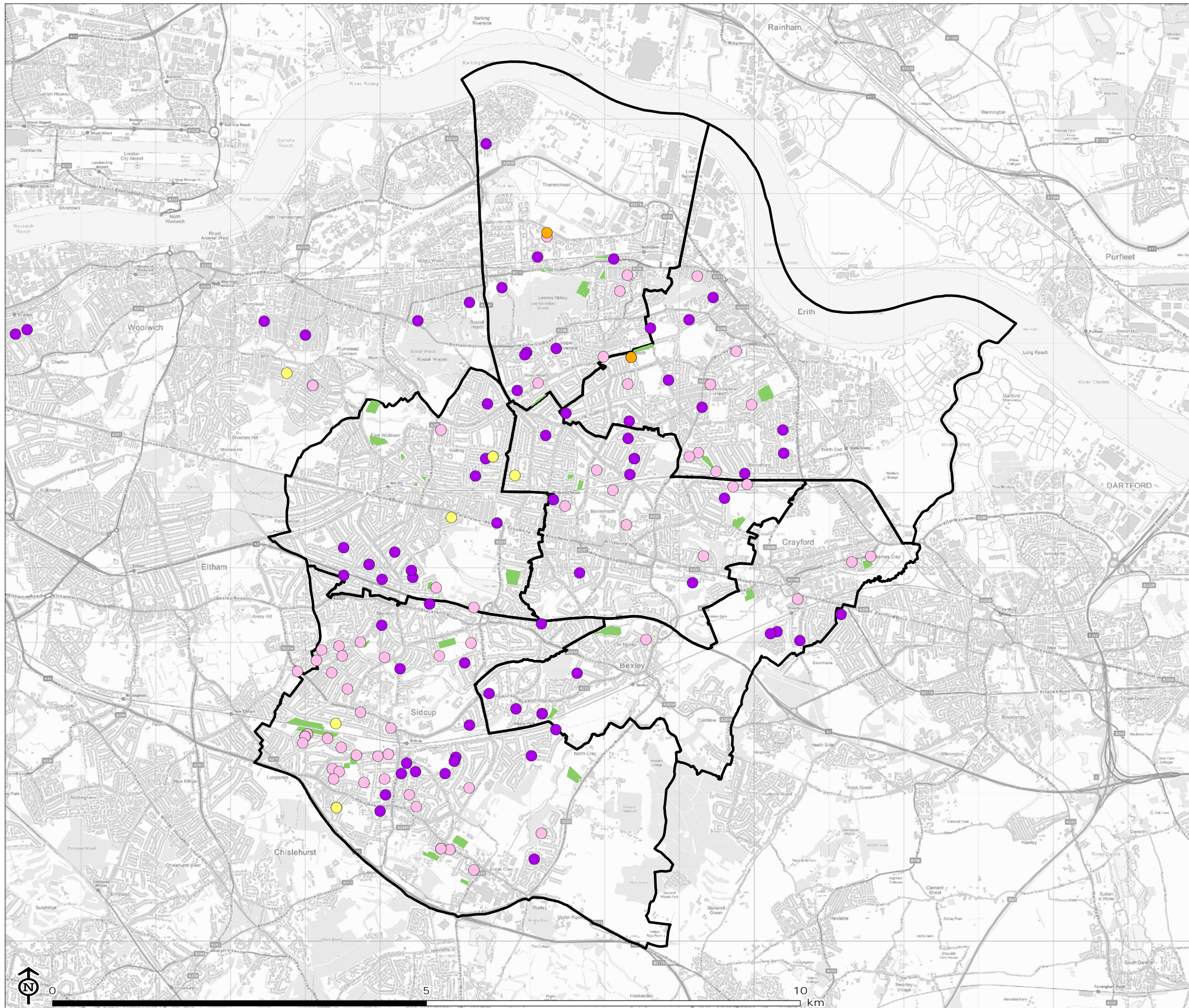
- Of the respondents to the survey, 28% currently use an allotment in Bexley, with 1% making use of an allotment outside of Bexley and less than 1% on a waiting list for an allotment in Bexley. A further 12% of respondents reported that although they were not currently on a waiting list for an allotment they would be interested in managing a plot.
- Most respondents to the survey were located within either 5 minutes (35%) or between 5 minutes and 10 minutes (36%) from the allotment they make use of. A further breakdown of accessibility of allotments in Bexley in relation to their travel times for respondents is provided in **Figure 6.36** below. The mode of travel used by allotment holders is shown in **Figure 6.37**.
- 32% of respondents reported that they were either very satisfied (13%) or fairly satisfied (19%) with the quality of allotments in Bexley while 3% reported that they were either very dissatisfied (1%) or fairly dissatisfied (2%).

Figure 6.36: Accessibility of allotments in Bexley in terms of the travel times of respondents to the site they make use of



Bexley Green Infrastructure Study

Figure 6.37: Bexley allotment users and transport used to access allotments



Geographic regions

Allotments

What mode of transport do you use for the majority of your journey when going to your allotment plot? (Users of Bexley allotments only)

- By bicycle
- By bus
- By car
- On foot

Map Scale @A3: 1:50,000



Summary of feedback from stakeholder consultation

A number of internal and external stakeholders¹¹⁶ who are involved in the maintenance and management of elements of Bexley's open spaces were consulted whilst preparing this evidence base. In order to comply with the Duty to Cooperate, consultation also included active engagement with neighbouring authorities. Information on the open space standards of neighbouring boroughs was gathered to understand the extent of provision in those boroughs. This review is included in **Appendix F**.

The study was informed by contact with internal teams at London Borough of Bexley including those responsible for Planning, Health, Parks and Well-being and Town Centres. A workshop held early on in the development of this study aided in identifying the range of existing strategies and programmes in place or in development.

One or more representatives of the following teams and organisations were also contacted through this study:

Neighbouring authorities

Representatives of neighbouring London boroughs:

- Dartford Borough Council
- London Borough of Bromley
- Royal Borough of Greenwich

The Borough of Barking and Dagenham, Borough of Havering, Thurrock and Sevenoaks District either did not provide feedback or replied to say that their limited connection with Bexley meant that cross boundary opportunities did not apply.

Other bodies

Community organisations and friends' groups

Representatives of various community groups, friends' groups and environmental action organisations including:

- Friends of Riverside Gardens Erith
- Friends of the Shuttle
- Friends of Danson Park

- Bexley Natural Environment Forum
- London Wildlife Trust
- North West Kent Countryside Partnership
- Crossness Nature Reserve

Other stakeholders

Representatives from groups responsible for the management of large or important areas of land in the borough including:

- Port of London Authority
- Peabody Group

Scope of external stakeholder consultation

Representatives of the organisations listed above were consulted in person or contacted via email or telephone. The focus of consultation with each of the groups outlined above was as follows:

Neighbouring Authorities

- Opportunities for open spaces which might benefit from cross-boundary discussions or partnerships
- The open spaces within neighbouring boroughs that are utilised by Bexley residents
- The open spaces within Bexley that residents of neighbouring boroughs also utilise

Other bodies (including environmental bodies and community, voluntary and friends' groups)

- Responsibilities of the group for any open spaces in the borough in relation to key management and maintenance issues and how these might change over the next five years
- Initiatives planned or underway to enhance any open spaces in the borough

Headline findings

Considering the open-ended nature of the consultation questions posed to the stakeholders a wide range of responses were received. The headline findings from this consultation are outlined in **Table 6.13**.

¹¹⁶ Representatives from groups responsible for the management of large or important areas of land in the borough provided feedback including Port of London Authority and Peabody Group.

Table 6.13: Stakeholder consultation findings

Consultee	Headlines	Issue/opportunity raised
<p>London Borough of Bexley (including feedback from internal workshop attended by members of Planning Parks, Public Health and Town Centres teams)</p>	<p>Street trees and private gardens play an important role for GI in Bexley.</p> <p>Future provision and enhancement of GI assets can provide a range of benefits to issues such as biodiversity, health and flood mitigation. Using GI provision to help address health issues in the Thamesmead area will be of particular importance considering high level of new growth to be delivered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A number of general themes emerged from the consultation undertaken with both internal contacts at the Council which were also reflected by comments from external bodies. These relate to the protection of garden trees and mature trees in particular; considering the important role trees and the tree canopy can play in terms of shading, filtration of pollutants, regulating water flow and reducing the potential for the urban heat island effect. This also reflects the role that areas of private gardens, and the appropriate protection of these areas, can make in the borough, particularly where deficiencies in public green space have been identified. ■ The potential contribution the strategic green corridors (and the London Green Chain in particular) in the borough can make in terms of biodiversity value and health and wellbeing should be strengthened as part of any improvements to the green infrastructure network. It will be important that the different types of benefit these elements of green infrastructure can provide are appropriately recognised. ■ Health deficiencies in the borough should be considered when opportunities for green infrastructure provision are set out in the borough. This will be particularly relevant in the Thamesmead area considering high level of new growth which will take place in this area and the existing health issues which have been identified. ■ There is also opportunity to make use of existing green infrastructure assets and any potential for future provision to area flood risk in the borough.
<p>Neighbouring boroughs</p>	<p>Residents in neighbouring boroughs are using open spaces and playing pitches in Bexley and vice versa.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Important areas of open space that could benefit from cross boundary discussions in Dartford include Dartford Marshes, Dartford Heath and Joydens Wood. ■ In the Royal Borough of Greenwich there are areas of open space such as Bostall Woods and Birchmere Park which are easily accessible to residents of Bexley. Furthermore, the Thamesmead area of open space is currently undergoing review by Peabody which takes in areas in both Greenwich and Bexley. Playing pitches in Greenwich are used by clubs whose members reside outside the borough. Any loss of pitches in Bexley would also adversely affect Greenwich football clubs. (Imported and exported demand for playing pitches is covered in Chapter 7 of this report).
<p>North West Kent Countryside Partnership</p>	<p>Funding cuts have affected impacted on maintenance and increased perceptions of lack of safety.</p> <p>Volunteer groups are playing an increasingly important role.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The North West Kent Countryside Partnership coordinates volunteer programmes in open spaces across Bexley including those at various school grounds, St Mary's Church and Churchyard, Crossness Engines grounds, the community herb garden at Hall Place Gardens, the Ridgeway and Lesnes Abbey Woods. The group has highlighted that funding cuts are an issue in the Borough; particularly in terms of reduced staff presence in green spaces which has led to maintenance

Consultee	Headlines	Issue/opportunity raised
		<p>issues and increased perceptions of lack of safety in some places. Volunteer groups are increasingly important for local spaces and the Council has sought to take appropriate steps to support them. It is also thought that increasing numbers of volunteers in the local community helps to promote residents' wellbeing and community cohesion.</p>
Peabody Group	<p>Manage large areas of green space. Thamesmead GI Strategy is in development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Peabody Group currently manage approximately 150ha of green space across Bexley and Greenwich as well as waterbodies which cover 2ha across these areas. The group is therefore concerned about green infrastructure which falls between these two boroughs. A Thamesmead Green Infrastructure Strategy has recently been commissioned (anticipated to take a year) and the concept of GI will feed into the Opportunity Area Planning Framework for the Thamesmead and Abbey Wood Opportunity Area. The (now closed) Thames View Golf Centre has been identified as a potential area of interest/opportunity for open space.
London Wildlife Trust	<p>Motorbike usage on sites is a problem.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The London Wildlife Trust co-lead on the Thamesmead & Marsh Dykes Catchment Improvement Group and has recently been in discussions with Peabody in relation to the future landscaping of Thamesmead. There is currently a need for a catchment plan for the area and while this land is within the Greenwich boundary it borders Bexley directly. Within the borough, the Trust is responsible for the maintenance of Former Gun Club Site (Braeburn Park) in Crayford and has highlighted motorbike usage at the site as a result of uncontrolled access along the public rights of way network and general resourcing issues as key management issues for this area. This is mirrored by comments from the Council that motorbike incursion is a key issue for the management of other open spaces in the borough, including at Erith Marshes (Erith Marshes (Part) North and Erith Marshes (Part) South) and in Thamesmead. The areas of interest for the Trust within Bexley include Erith and Crayford Marshes as well as the management of Bexley Woods. At present, the Trust provides advice to the council about the management of Bexley Woods.
Friends' Groups	<p>Friends' groups coordinate volunteer activity with support from the council. There is a lack of communication between organisations involved in various maintenance programmes. This can result in a lack of clarity over future plans. While council officers are supportive, budget cuts mean not all maintenance issues can be addressed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Friends of Riverside Gardens Erith ("FORGE") currently organise volunteers in Bexley. Their maintenance activities include areas of the Riverside Gardens (Riverside Gardens (North) and Riverside Gardens (South)) as well as areas along the Thames foreshore, footpaths and Cory Promenade and Riverside Gardens (in collaboration with Thames 21). This work has been undertaken with the support of Bexley Council. ■ Friends of the River Shuttle are involved in the management of two open spaces within the borough. These are Riverside Walk / Penhill Road to Albany Road (River Shuttle) along its entirety once it enters the borough of Bexley by Parish Woods and the Old English Garden in Danson Park. Key management issues relate to a lack of clarity over

Consultee	Headlines	Issue/opportunity raised
	<p>There may be opportunities related to the potential renovation of buildings on sites.</p> <p>Volunteers are not being attracted from younger age groups.</p>	<p>future plans for the River Shuttle. This relates to a lack of communication between organisations involved in various maintenance programmes such as vegetation management. Similar issues relating to a lack of clarity for planned improvements and maintenance have been identified for the land at the Old English Garden. Further problems identified for the Old English Garden relate to footpath maintenance, lack of suitable litter bin provision, theft and vandalism within the garden. The group has highlighted that while council officers are supportive, they do not have the budget to complete the tasks required to address maintenance issues raised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Friends of Danson Park are a community group who run volunteer activities within the park while the council has the main responsibilities for management. Similar to many of the other community groups and friends' groups in Bexley, the group is aware of funding issues related to maintenance issues at the park. Opportunities which may currently be present at the park include the potential for renovation of the buildings on site. ■ The responses received indicate that many groups feel that they receive an appropriate level of support from the Council to undertake their maintenance activities and that increasing numbers of volunteers in the local community helps to promote residents' wellbeing and community cohesion. However, this approach presents potential threats relating to a lack of understanding of volunteers, and reduced strength of the linkages between habitat management and biodiversity and the wider approach to management of green space in the borough. Furthermore, volunteers are not being attracted from younger age groups.
National Grid	<p>Current asset replacement scheme presents opportunities for enhancements measures to benefit wildlife.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ National Grid is currently progressing an asset replacement scheme to provide new electrical circuits in South London to replace old oil filled cables. Some of the existing oil filled electrical cables are buried close to the surface within Hall Place Gardens in Bexley. While there are no enhancement works proposed to the Hall Place Recreation Ground as part of these works, impacts to this land through this scheme are to be kept to a minimum and public access will be retained throughout. It is proposed that the replacement for the direct buried cables will be placed within a deep tunnel which will come to the surface at Crayford Rough. A head house building is proposed adjacent to Crayford Grey Hound Stadium and Crayford Train Station at Crayford Rough. A Planning Application was submitted to the Local Planning Authority in 2019 for the erection of a head house at Crayford Rough, with associated landscaping including the provision of flood compensation areas, along with ecological mitigation and enhancement measures to benefit wildlife.

Consultee	Headlines	Issue/opportunity raised
<p>Bexley Natural Environment Forum (BNEF)</p>	<p>Key issues include lack of funding, lack of understanding, and reduced strength of the linkages between habitat management and biodiversity.</p> <p>Concerned about pressures on open space and biodiversity as a result of development.</p> <p>Noted steady input from volunteers, but younger age groups not being attracted to volunteering.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ As an organisation Bexley Natural Environment Forum do not directly manage or undertake the management of any individual sites. However, as an umbrella group for other bodies interested in the environment and wildlife in Bexley, the group focusses wider discussions on sites and green infrastructure of local importance and plans and programmes which may affect them. The organisation has highlighted a lack of funding, lack of understanding, and reduced strength of the linkages between habitat management and biodiversity as key issues for management and maintenance of open spaces in the borough. They feel that these issues have been less of a priority due to an increased push for development and housing in the borough. As an approach to redress this imbalance there may be a need for developers to address open space deficiencies as a part of new development proposals. The organisation also highlighted the value of brownfield land towards the 'Thames gateway' area in alleviating development pressures on greenfield land in the borough. ■ The organisation's response also highlighted that there is a steady input from volunteers in the borough. However, volunteers are not being attracted from younger age groups. Local volunteer groups have been identified as a valuable resource to improve the maintenance of locally important open spaces with Fooks Cray Meadows being highlighted as a good example of management undertaken with input from locals and friends' groups. It has also been highlighted that there are concerns about loss of SINC land to development in Bexley. Further losses of important wilder areas to industrial development have occurred at the Thames Marshes areas within the borough in recent years.

Development of standards

This section recommends open space provision standards. These were defined through review of the existing provision of open space, alongside the comments received through public consultation, as well as consideration of nationally recognised provision standards, and those adopted by neighbouring boroughs. There are three types of open space standard:

- **Accessibility:** The maximum distance residents should be required to travel to use an open space of a specific typology;
- **Quantity:** The provision (measured in number of sites or hectares) of each open space typology which should be provided as a minimum per 1000 population; and
- **Quality and Value:** The quality of the open space provided in each typology, assessed using the Green Flag criteria. The value of the open space provided in each typology.

Benchmarking was undertaken as part of the analysis to ensure that the proposed open space standards for Bexley are feasible and promote a similar approach to that applied elsewhere. A summary of the review of standards in neighbouring authorities can be found in **Appendix F**.

There is some variation between London Boroughs, but the majority conform to the Mayor of London's Open Space Strategies: Best practice guidance¹¹⁷ and suggested distance thresholds. There is greater variation between quantity and accessibility standards.

Rather than develop a quantity standard for each typology, it is considered appropriate to consider the following typologies together when setting a quantity standard for **public open space** provision:

- Typology A: Parks and gardens
- Typology B: Natural and semi-natural green space
- Typology D: Amenity green space

No quantity or accessibility standards have been proposed for cemeteries and churchyards. This reflects the fact that proximity is not considered to be a requirement of this open space type. Whilst this section considers cemeteries and churchyards in terms of their recreational role, **Chapter 11** of this report addresses demand for cemeteries in terms of their role in burial of the deceased. Similarly, no quantity or accessibility standard is proposed for linear open spaces.

A quantity standard has been developed for allotments and play provision. A quantity standard has not been developed for outdoor sports facilities as these have been considered in **Chapter 7** of this GI study in line with Sport England Guidance.

In order to assess the performance of open spaces in terms of quality and value, the following factors have informed the standards:

- Key characteristics expected of spaces within the different typologies and levels of the hierarchy.
- High quality and/or high value sites within Bexley which provide a 'benchmark' against which to assess sites.
- Ensuring standards are set at such a level to be aspirational, yet achievable based on existing quality and value.

Quality assessment

As part of the site audit, each site was assessed for quality against the Green Flag criteria, and the condition of the various components of a site rated as good, fair or poor. This assessment was then transposed through a scoring system into a quality score. In order to develop a quality standard which is appropriate for the type and function of open spaces in Bexley, the existing quality of provision was reviewed by typology and the associated hierarchy level. Through reviewing the range of quality scores, it was possible to form a quality threshold score, i.e. a minimum level of quality which should be achieved at any open space. A threshold score has been defined for typology and each level of the hierarchy reflecting the ideal score scenario for a good quality site.

Value assessment

Value is fundamentally different from quality; a space can be valued for a range of reasons even it is of low quality. As set out in PPG17 Companion Guide, 'value' mainly relates to the following:

- **Context:** e.g. an easily accessible space is higher value than one that is inaccessible to potential users, equally the value of a space may diminish if it is immediately adjacent to several others which provides the same function.
- **Level and type of use:** the primary purpose and associated use of a space can increase its value - well used spaces are of high value to people, similarly

¹¹⁷ The Mayor of London/CABE Space, 2008. Open Space Strategies: Best Practice Guidance. Greater London Authority: London

spaces with diverse habitats can be well used by wildlife and can be interpreted as having a higher value.

- **Wider benefits:** i.e. the benefits a space generates for people, biodiversity and the wider environment including the following –landscape, ecological, education, social inclusion and health benefit, cultural and heritage, amenity benefits, ‘sense of place’ and economic benefits.

The site audit included information to be evaluated as part of the value assessments such as the value of play spaces, the presence of community facilities and the biodiversity value of habitats. The relevant audit information was reviewed to develop a value threshold score specific to the different types of open space in Bexley. A list of key characteristics was developed which could be expected of sites of a particular typology and at a particular level of the hierarchy.

Setting benchmark standards for quality and value

In order to assess the sites consistently the audit forms were scored using the scoring system shown in **Table 6.14**. The scores for each site were separated into factors that relate to quality and value. As set out in the PPG17 Companion Guide “quality and value are fundamentally different and can be completely unrelated”. For example, an open space may be

of high quality but if it is not accessible it is of little value, while if an open space is poor quality but has a wide range of facilities it is potentially of high value.

When assessing scored sites, it should be noted that the scoring varies according to the complexity of the site as well as the condition of the site which limits the extent to which one should directly compare scores across different types of space. This means that the quality score for a good quality park or garden will differ from that of a good quality amenity green space, reflecting the different provision that can be expected within each.

The value and quality scoring can be reviewed by total score or by the audit themes (linked to the Green Flag criteria). Each site was audited using a standard form with scores allocated to relevant criteria. A map and list of the open spaces audited through this study is contained within **Appendix B**.

Each site has therefore been rated with a combined quality and value band using the format of +/- symbols to annotate each band (i.e. higher quality/ higher value is shown as ++, higher quality/ lower value is shown as +-). **Table 6.14** suggests the future management approach to open spaces within each band.

Table 6.14: Quality and value matrix

Higher quality / higher value	Higher quality/ lower value
++	+-
<p>These sites are considered to be best open spaces within the borough offering the greatest value and quality for the surrounding communities.</p> <p>Future management should seek to maintain the standard for these spaces and ensure they continue to meet the requirements of the communities they serve.</p> <p>Ideally all spaces should fit into this category.</p>	<p>These sites have been scored as being of high quality but of a low value.</p> <p>Wherever possible the preferred management approach to a space in the category should to enhance its value in terms of its present primary typology or purpose.</p> <p>If this is not possible, the next best policy approach is to consider whether it might be of high value if converted to some other primary purpose.</p>
Lower quality/ higher value	Lower quality/ lower value
-+	--

<p>These spaces meet or exceed the required value standard but fall below the required quality standard.</p> <p>Future management should therefore seek to enhance their quality to ensure that the open spaces are welcoming and safe for use by the local community.</p>	<p>These spaces are falling below the applicable value and quality standards and therefore their future enhancement should be considered to be the priority.</p>
--	--

Proposed standards

Open space

The proposed standards for **public open space** are set out in **Table 6.15**.

Table 6.15: Proposed public open space standards for Bexley

Type of standard	Proposed standard		Justification
Quantity	4.2ha/1000 people		<p>This is the current provision of publicly accessible open space in Bexley as a whole based on 2016 population data.</p> <p>For the purposes of this calculation the following typologies contribute to public open space (as described in paragraph 6.91):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Typology A: Parks and gardens – Typology B: Natural and semi-natural urban green space – Typology D: Amenity green space <p>Sites that are not available for informal recreation (e.g. sports pitches only available for private use/ hire), have not been included within this calculation.</p> <p>Setting the standard at this level of provision will ensure that provision should not fall below the existing quantity per 1000 population as the population grows.</p>
Accessibility	Metropolitan 3.2km District 1.2km (15 mins) Local 400m (5 mins) Small local spaces 280m (<5 mins)		<p>Guided by GLA guidance.</p> <p>Consistent with surrounding boroughs.</p> <p>29% of those surveyed can reach their local park or open space in under 5 minutes. 60% can reach their local park in less than 10 minutes and 83% are within 15 minutes of their local park or open space.</p>
Quality	Metropolitan parks and gardens	67	Example of good quality site: Danson Park
	District parks and gardens	52	Example of good quality site: Hall Place Gardens
	Local parks and gardens	36	Example of good quality site: Stevens Park
	Small local parks and gardens	31	Example of good quality site: Riverside Gardens (North)
	Metropolitan natural and semi-natural green space	33	Example of good quality site: Lesnes Abbey Woods

	District natural and semi-natural green space	13	Example of good quality site: Erith Marshes (Part) North
	Local natural and semi-natural green space	13	Example of good quality site: Crayford Rough
	Small local natural and semi-natural green space	13	Example of good quality site: Riverside Walk / Riverdale Road
	Linear open spaces	19	Example of good quality site: River Cray
	Amenity green space	17	Example of good quality site: Leatherbottle Green
	Cemeteries and churchyards	30	Example of good quality site: Holy Trinity Church
Value	Metropolitan parks and gardens	80	Example of a good value site: Danson Park
	District parks and gardens	44	Example of a good value site: Hall Place Gardens
	Local parks and gardens	31	Example of a good value site: Waring Park
	Small local parks and gardens	31	Example of a good value site: West Heath Recreation Ground
	Metropolitan natural and semi-natural green space	39	Example of a good value site: Footh Cray Meadows
	District natural and semi-natural green space	12	Example of a good value site: Erith Marshes (Part) South
	Local natural and semi-natural green space	11	Example of a good value site: Bexley Woods
	Small local natural and semi-natural green space	10	Example of a good value site: Riverside Walk / Riverdale Road
	Linear open spaces	11	Example of a good value site: Manorway Green
	Amenity green space	29	Example of a good value site: Leatherbottle Green
	Cemeteries and churchyards	9	Example of a good value site: Hill View Cemetery

Allotments

The proposed standards for **allotments** are set out in **Table 6.16**.

Table 6.16: Proposed standards for allotment provision in Bexley

Type of standard	Proposed standard	Justification
Quantity	0.125ha/1000 people	There is no current national standard for the quantity of allotment provision. The National Society of Allotment and Leisure

		<p>Gardeners (NSALG) have suggested a national standard of 0.125 ha per 1000 population based on an average plot size of 250 square metres, however this is not referred to on the NSALG website. In 2006 the University of Derby completed a study on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister which indicated that the average provision of allotments was then 13 plots per 1000 households. The existing provision in Bexley is 0.197 ha/1000 population.</p> <p>The Allotment Asset Management Plan notes that there demand for allotments has been steadily increasing and there are around 100 people on the waiting list in 2017/8.</p>
Accessibility	800m-1.2km	Of the respondents who are allotment users, 71% are within 10 minutes travel of their plot and 89% within 15minutes. There is a relatively equal split between those who travel by car and those on foot.
Quality	19	Example of good quality site: Leatherbottle Allotment
Value	10	Example of a good value site: Leatherbottle Allotment

The proposed standards for **play provision** are set out in **Table 6.17**.

Table 6.17: Proposed standards for play provision in Bexley

Type of standard	Proposed standard	Justification
Quantity	A minimum of 10 square metres of dedicated play space per child.	Guided by the Mayor of London's Supplementary Planning Guidance <i>Shaping Neighbourhoods: Play and Informal Recreation</i>
Accessibility	Neighbourhood 800m Local 400m Doorstep 100m Other play/youth 800m	Guided by the Mayor of London's Supplementary Planning Guidance <i>Shaping Neighbourhoods: Play and Informal Recreation</i>
Quality	Neighbourhood 4 Local 3 Doorstep 3 Other play/youth 3	Expected score for a good quality site
Value	Neighbourhood 30 Local 18 Doorstep 16	Expected score for a good value site

Application of proposed standards

The standards proposed in **Table 6.15** to **6.17** have been applied to sites in Bexley to get an understanding of the extent

to which standards are being achieved and also to determine where there are deficiencies that need to be addressed.

Quantity

Table 6.18 shows how provision of open space reduces with an increase of population. Crayford and Old Bexley and Belvedere currently enjoy the highest levels of provision per 1,000 population (6.9ha and 6.2ha per 1000 people respectively). Bexleyheath, Erith and Welling are currently below the proposed standard, and this deficit will be exacerbated by 2036.

This is not in itself a reason to preclude development in such areas though. Instead, it will be particularly important to secure new open spaces within these areas. Where new provision is not possible, alternative approaches to new open spaces such as small civic spaces, small local sites and linear

open spaces will therefore be needed alongside features such as balconies and green roofs; so that developments maximise opportunities for the provision of new open space. [Chapter 9](#) of this study explores the extent to which other urban greening features are found in these areas.

The standards adopted by nearby London boroughs are detailed in **Appendix F**. Boroughs can express their quantity standards in a number of ways making direct comparison difficult, but the proposed quantity standard is similar to Bromley and Havering – although provision standards are expressed by typology and hierarchy making it difficult to compare like for like.

Table 6.18: Application of open space quantity standard to identify shortfall/surplus

Geographic Region	Public open space (ha)	Population 2016	Population 2036	Ha per 1000 2016	Ha per 1000 2036
Belvedere	234.1	37,831	44,427	6.2	5.3
Bexleyheath	89.5	33,508	42,104	2.7	2.1
Crayford and Old Bexley	170.6	24,646	29,258	6.9	5.8
Erith	169.0	47,073	58,204	3.6	2.9
Sidcup	266.9	56,781	60,958	4.7	4.4
Welling	109.7	45,151	50,433	2.4	2.2
Total	1039.7	244,990	285,384	4.2	3.6

The findings of the study indicate that there are existing deficiencies in the quantity of allotment provision in Belvedere, Bexleyheath and Erith. Although the Allotment Asset Management Plan estimates that there are approximately 100 people currently on a waiting list for an allotment, public consultation highlighted that there are a number of residents

who would be interested in food growing, but are currently not captured on a waiting list.

Table 6.19 shows the provision of allotments in the borough compared to the proposed standard.

Table 6.19: Provision of allotments against the quantity standard

Geographic Region	Allotments, community gardens and city farms (ha)	Population 2016	Population 2036	Ha per 1000 2016	Ha per 1000 2036
Belvedere	4.5	37,831	44,427	0.118	0.101
Bexleyheath	3.3	33,508	42,104	0.098	0.078
Crayford and Old Bexley	8.5	24,646	29,258	0.345	0.291
Erith	5.9	47,073	58,204	0.124	0.101
Sidcup	17.0	56,781	60,958	0.299	0.279
Welling	9.1	45,151	50,433	0.201	0.180
Total	48.2	244,990	285,384	0.197	0.169

Provision of playable spaces in Bexley varies between Geographic Regions. **Table 6.20** shows how provision of play spaces reduces with an increase in the child population up to 2036. These figures show the area of play provision per child at 2016 and at 2036 based on current provision. The Mayor's

standard of 10 square metres per child includes provision for both informal and formal provision. It is important to note that this assessment has not included a full audit of play spaces that sit outside of Bexley parks and open spaces (such as provision on housing estates).

Table 6.20: Relative provision of playable spaces per Geographic Region

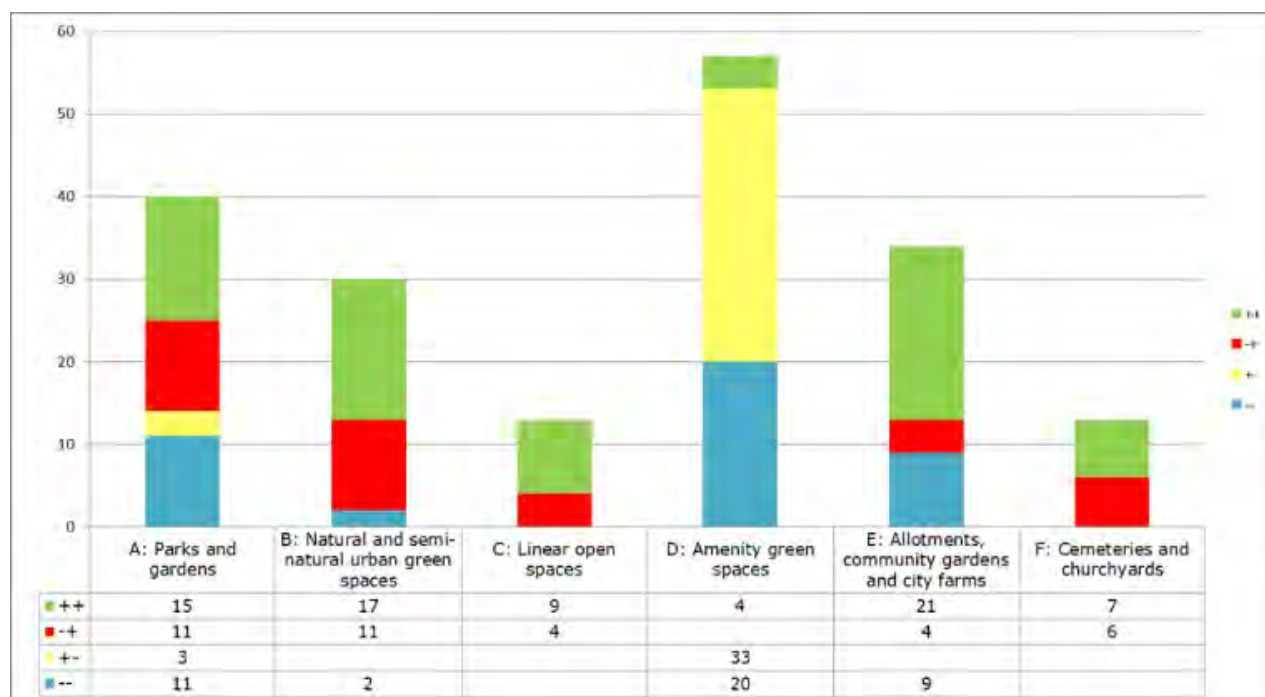
Geographic Region	Population aged 0-15 (2016)	Population aged 0-15 (2036)	Area (m2)	Play per child (m2) 2016	Play per child (m2) 2036
Belvedere	9,099	9,889	22,773	2.5	2.3
Bexleyheath	6,062	7,469	6,087	1.0	0.8
Crayford and Old Bexley	5,151	5,921	7,485	1.5	1.3
Erith	11,059	12,847	14,994	1.4	1.2
Sidcup	10,501	10,718	14,054	1.3	1.3
Welling	8,689	8,990	18,466	2.1	2.1
Bexley	50,561	55,834	83,860	1.7	1.5

Quality, value and accessibility

Appendix G shows the full list of audited sites with their quality and value ratings. Application of the proposed quality, value and accessibility standards is explored at the borough level and for each Geographic Region below.

The standards help to form the basis for redressing the quantitative and qualitative deficiencies through the planning process by highlighting where investment in existing spaces to enhance their role, or the provision of new spaces, should be focussed. **Figure 6.38** shows the range of quality and value ratings across the typologies.

Figure 6.38: Range of quality and value ratings across typologies



As a general borough-wide theme, analysis of site benchmarking highlights the presence of several lower value parks and amenity spaces that could benefit from investment to improve their functionality. Contrasting this, many of the amenity spaces have achieved higher quality ratings. **Figure 6.39** shows the distribution of higher and lower quality/value sites across the borough.

The audit questions addressing conditions of allotments showed that they were all in ‘fair’ or ‘good’ condition. However, when the whole site is considered (access, signage, security etc.), a number of sites are falling below the expected quality standard.

For larger sites, half of the sites have exceeded the quality and value standards. 85% of these larger sites exceed the quality standard. At the local level, the majority of sites exceeded the value threshold, but the majority fell short of the quality standard. At small local level, more than half of the sites exceeded the quality thresholds and half of the sites

exceeded the value threshold. The largest numbers of sites falling below both the quality and value thresholds are at this level of the hierarchy.

As shown in **Figure 6.40**, at a metropolitan level, Danson Park serves the western half of the borough as well as parts of Greenwich. The quality and value of this site is high. The four large natural and semi natural urban green spaces adequately cover the rest of the borough at this level of the hierarchy. The sites in the east of the borough are not meeting either the quality or value standards. In addition, the borough is served by Scadbury Country Park (Bromley), Dartford Marshes (Dartford) and Bostall Woods (Greenwich).

As shown in **Figure 6.41**, at district level, there are large areas of deficiency in access to district open space in Erith, Bexleyheath and Sidcup. Two district level sites are majority freely accessible, but do have some areas with restricted access. There are eight natural and semi natural urban green spaces providing access to residents in the north west corner

of Bexley and along the south eastern edge; four of these sites are of lower quality and/or value; the remaining four sites have higher quality and value. Four parks and gardens provide some access to parts of all Geographic Regions of Bexley except Erith. All four district level parks and gardens are of higher value; however two are of lower quality.

Sites from Bromley and Greenwich provide some access to district level sites in areas that would otherwise be deficient in access to district sites within Bexley; Scadbury Country Park (Bromley), Kemnal Manor (Bromley), Bostall Woods (Greenwich), Shepherdleas Meadow and Wood (Greenwich), Oxleas Wood (Greenwich), Avery Hill Park (Greenwich).

In **Figure 6.42** gaps in access to local open space are shown in all Geographic Regions of Bexley, with central and south Welling, parts of Sidcup, the eastern edge of Bexleyheath and central Erith having the largest areas of deficiency. Quality and value at this level of the hierarchy varies across the borough; 11 of the 37 local level natural and semi-natural green spaces have higher quality and value ratings, 12 sites have no access, and the remaining sites had lower quality. In total, 12 of the 34 local level parks and gardens had higher quality and value ratings and the remaining sites had lower quality ratings. Local level open spaces in Greenwich and Bromley provide access to areas along the edges of Erith, Bexleyheath and Sidcup that would otherwise be deficient in access to local open spaces in Bexley. Two sites with no public access have the potential to provide open space access in areas of deficiency:

- Site 115: Wimpey Land, Drayton Road
- Site 90: Land at Perry Street

As shown in **Figure 6.43**, at small local level there are similar patterns of deficiency to those at local level. Whilst all Geographic Regions have some areas of deficiency, central and south Welling, the eastern edge of Bexleyheath and central Erith Geographic Regions are the most deficient. Quality and value varies throughout the borough at this level of the hierarchy, with lower quality and lower value sites more frequently occurring in the east of the borough.

Figure 6.44 shows access to public open space (made up of parks and gardens, natural and semi-natural urban green space and amenity green space). All Geographic Regions have pockets of deficiency, however Welling has a large area of deficiency in the centre and south of the region. There is another large area of deficiency on the border of Belvedere and Erith. Whilst the area is currently largely industrial, it is an Opportunity Area and will be the focus of new development in the future; with significant population growth forecasted, the deficiency of open space in the area will be exacerbated. Amenity green spaces provide access to public open space in

many areas where parks and gardens or natural and semi-natural green spaces do not provide access; examples of this are south Erith, north west Bexleyheath and east Sidcup.

Figure 6.45 shows the combined deficiency in access to open space. As a result of all areas being within the catchment of MOL, there are no areas deficient in access to all levels of the hierarchy. There are small pockets of all Geographic Regions deficient in access to three levels of the hierarchy except Crayford and Old Bexley and Belvedere. A large pocket of Welling is deficient in access to 3 levels of the open space hierarchy, however Oxleas Woods and Falconwood Fields in Greenwich provide additional access. The eastern half of the borough enjoys better access to all levels of the hierarchy than the west and north.

A band of areas deficient in access to one or two levels of the hierarchy stretches from the south west corner of the borough through Welling, the west of Bexleyheath and western parts of Erith.

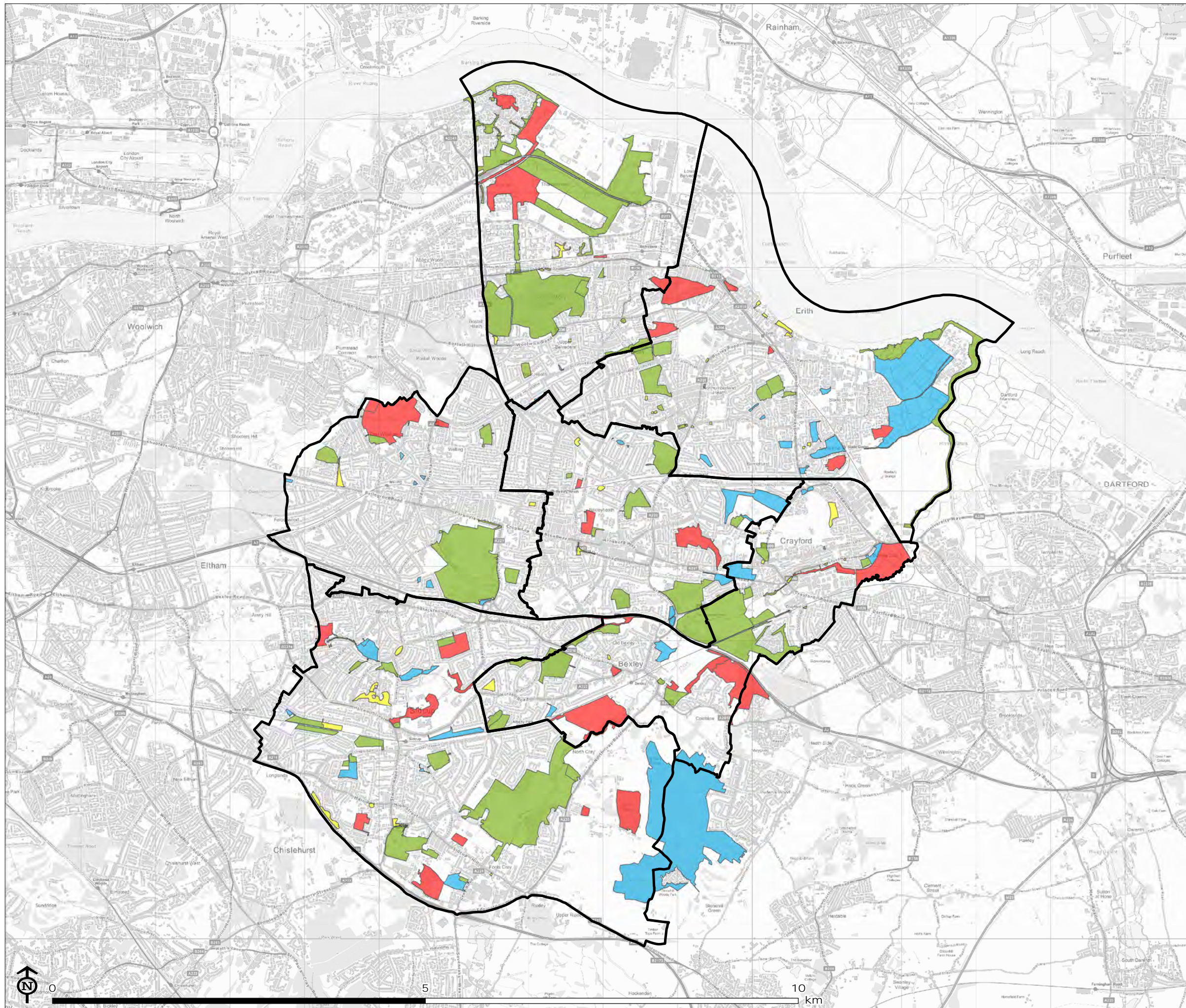
As shown in **Figure 6.46** there are areas deficient in access to allotments in the north of the Borough as well as in Sidcup and Welling Geographic Regions. In addition, there are a number of areas in the centre of the borough that do not fall within the shorter 800 m (10 minute walk) accessibility catchment. There were 37 sites identified; 21 were of higher quality and value, 3 sites were not accessible to audit and the remaining sites were of lower quality and/or value. Whilst the overall condition of all allotment sites were found to be in 'good' or 'fair' condition (para 3.68), in other sections of the audit such as entrances, cleanliness or security some of the sites scored less well.

Figure 6.47 shows the sites with play coloured up by the overall rating of all play spaces within them. As shown in **Figure 6.47**, the majority of the borough's residents are within a catchment of a play space. The exceptions to this are:

- the north eastern corner of Belvedere;
- the north western and north eastern corners of Erith;
- the area to the north of Bexleyheath Station;
- southern parts of Bexleyheath Geographic Region into southern Crayford and Old Bexley Geographic Region; and
- Western Sidcup.

Bexley Green Infrastructure Study

Figure 6.39: Open space quality and value scores



Geographic regions

Open space quality and value

Higher quality, higher value

Higher quality, lower value

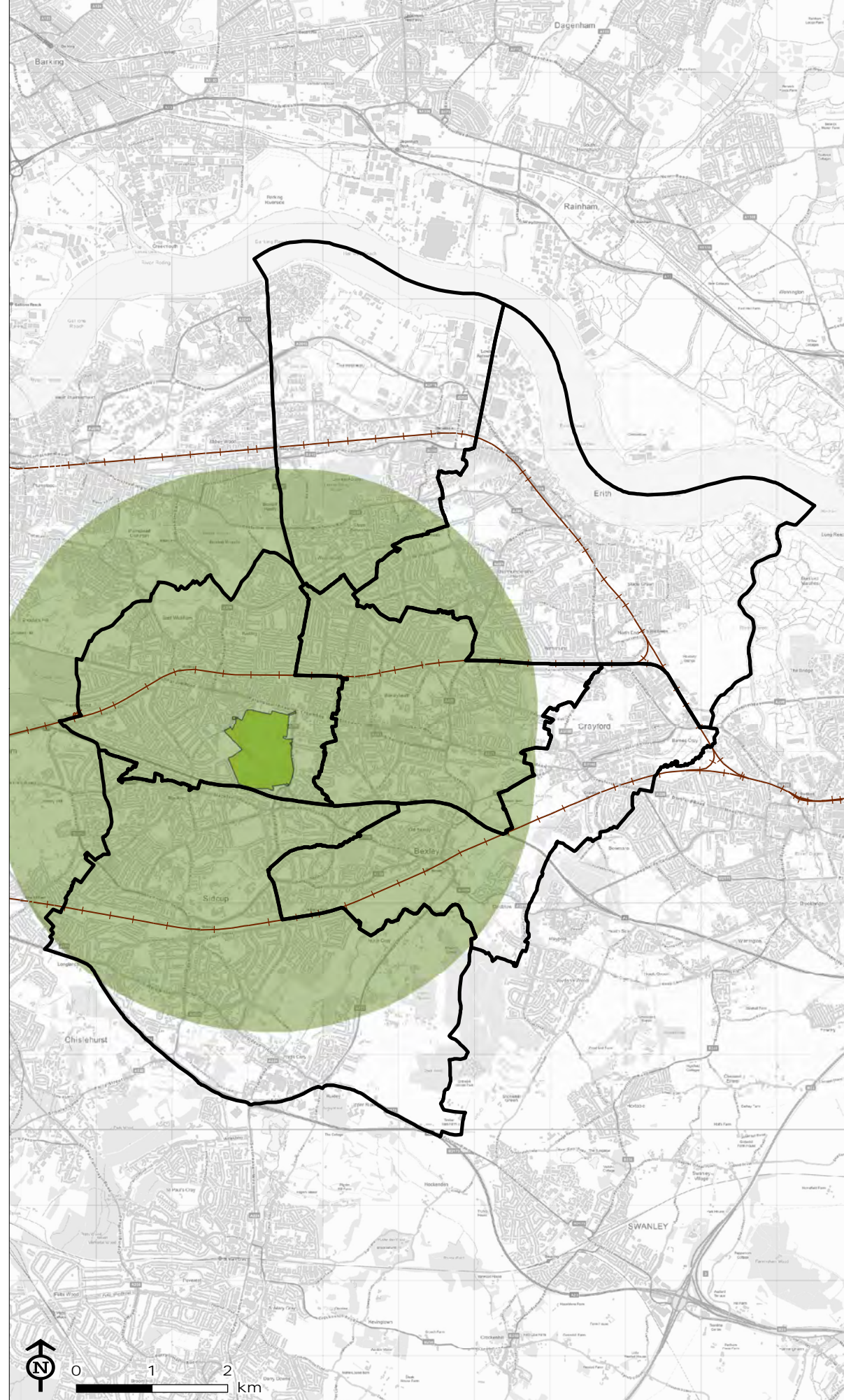
Lower quality, higher value

Lower quality, lower value

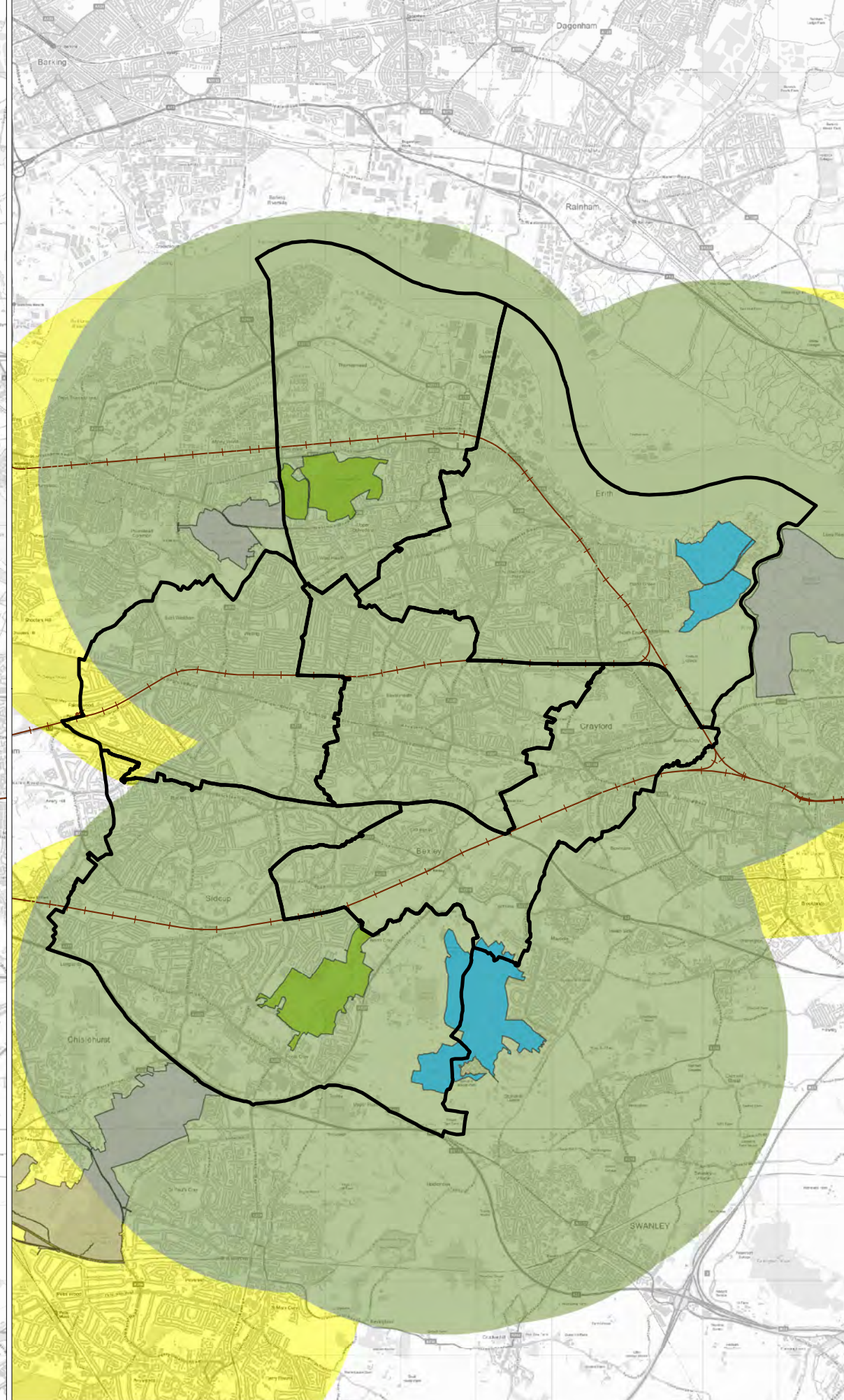
Map Scale @A3: 1:50,000



Parks and Gardens












Natural and Semi-Natural Green Space



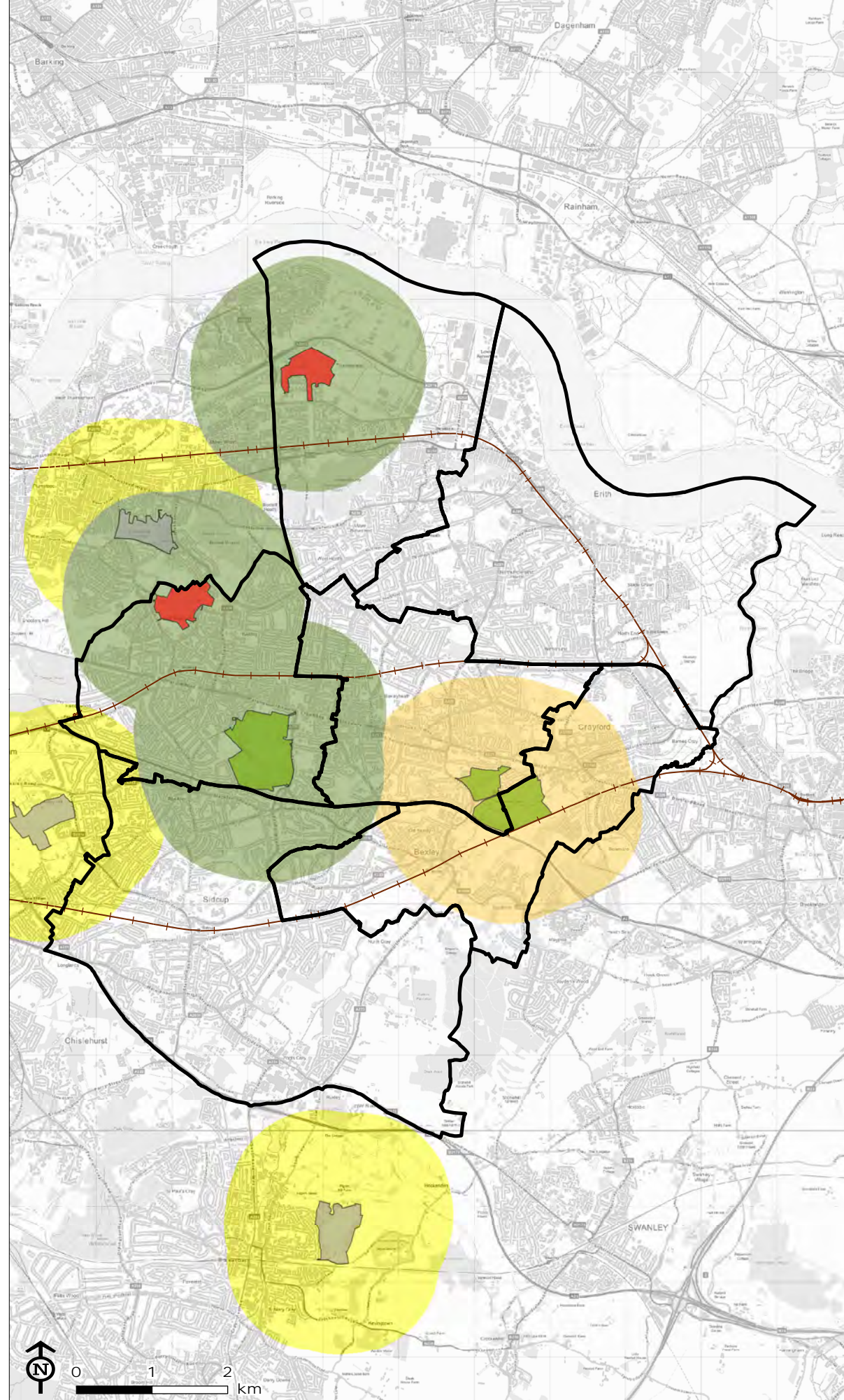
Bexley Green Infrastructure Study

Figure 6.40: Metropolitan Open Space Access

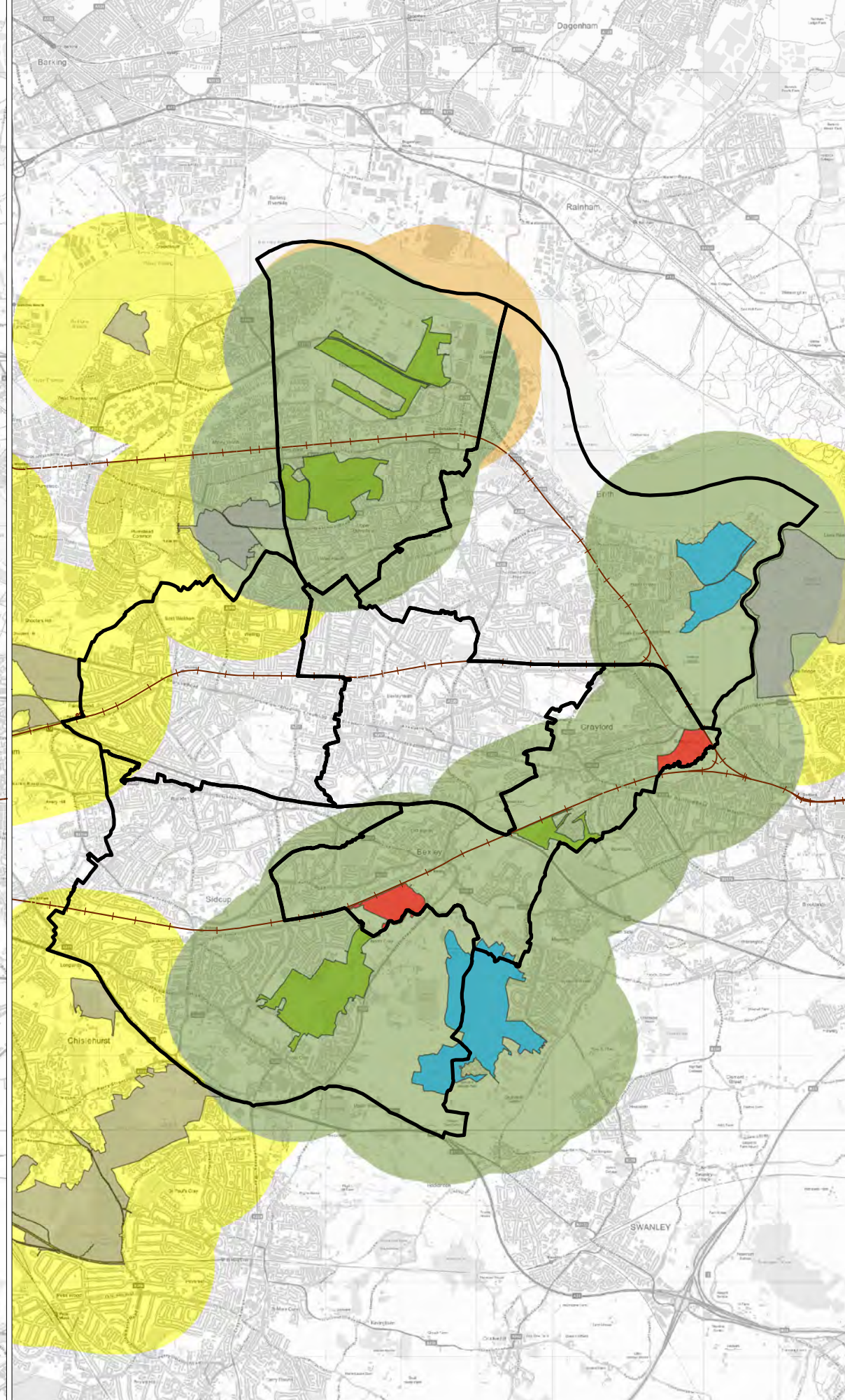
-  Geographic regions
-  Railway lines that may act as barriers
- Open space quality and value
 -  Higher quality, higher value
 -  Higher quality, lower value
 -  Lower quality, higher value
 -  Lower quality, lower value
 -  Open space outside Bexley
- 3.2 km accessibility catchment
 -  Freely accessible to public
 -  Catchment of site outside Bexley



Parks and Gardens



Natural and Semi-Natural Green Space



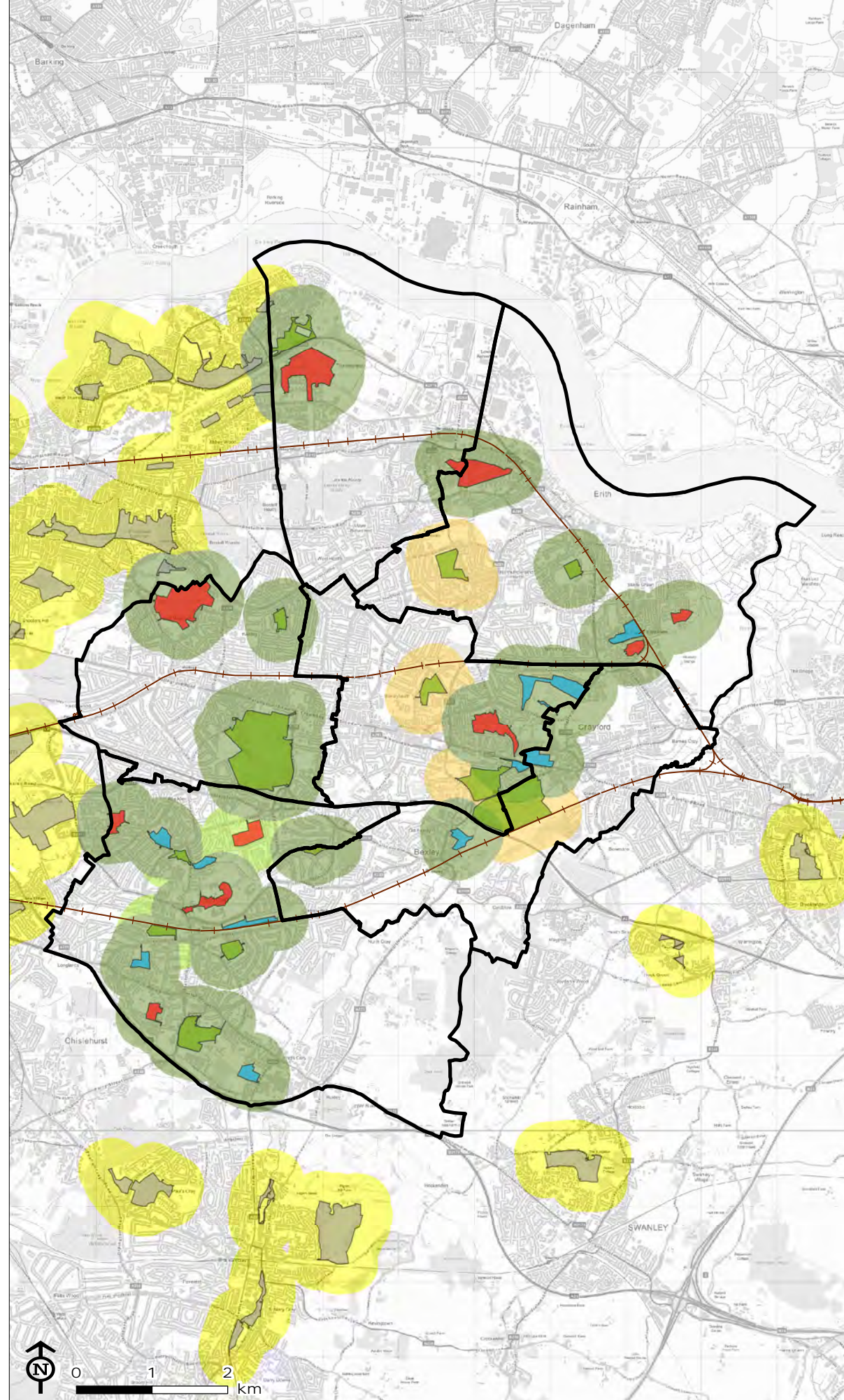
Bexley Green Infrastructure Study

Figure 6.41: District open space access

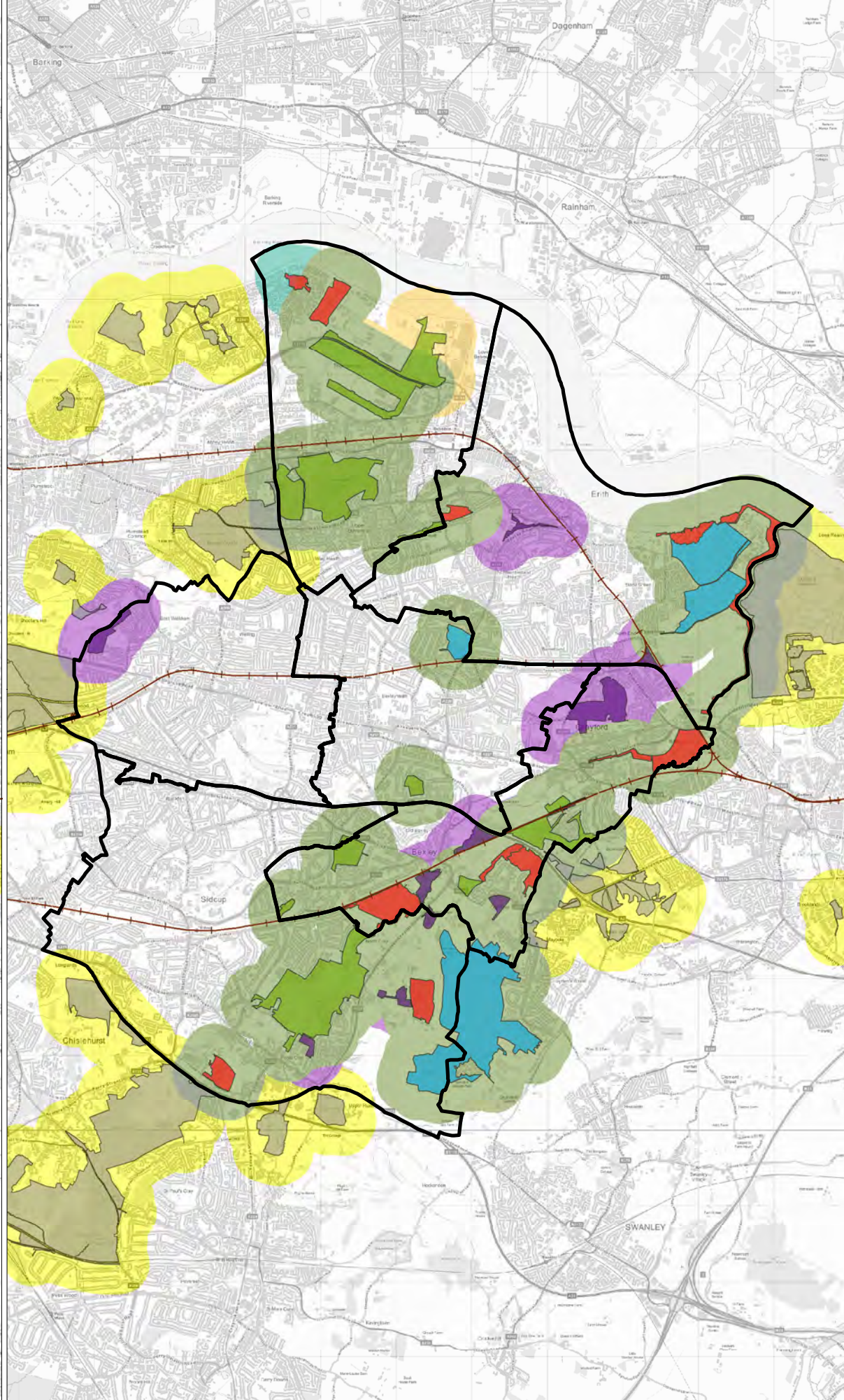
- Geographic regions
- Railway lines that may act as barriers
- Open space quality and value
 - Higher quality, higher value
 - Higher quality, lower value
 - Lower quality, higher value
 - Lower quality, lower value
 - Open space outside Bexley
- 1.2 km accessibility catchment
 - Freely accessible to public
 - Majority freely accessible with some restricted areas
 - Catchment of sites outside Bexley



Parks and Gardens



Natural and Semi-Natural Green Space



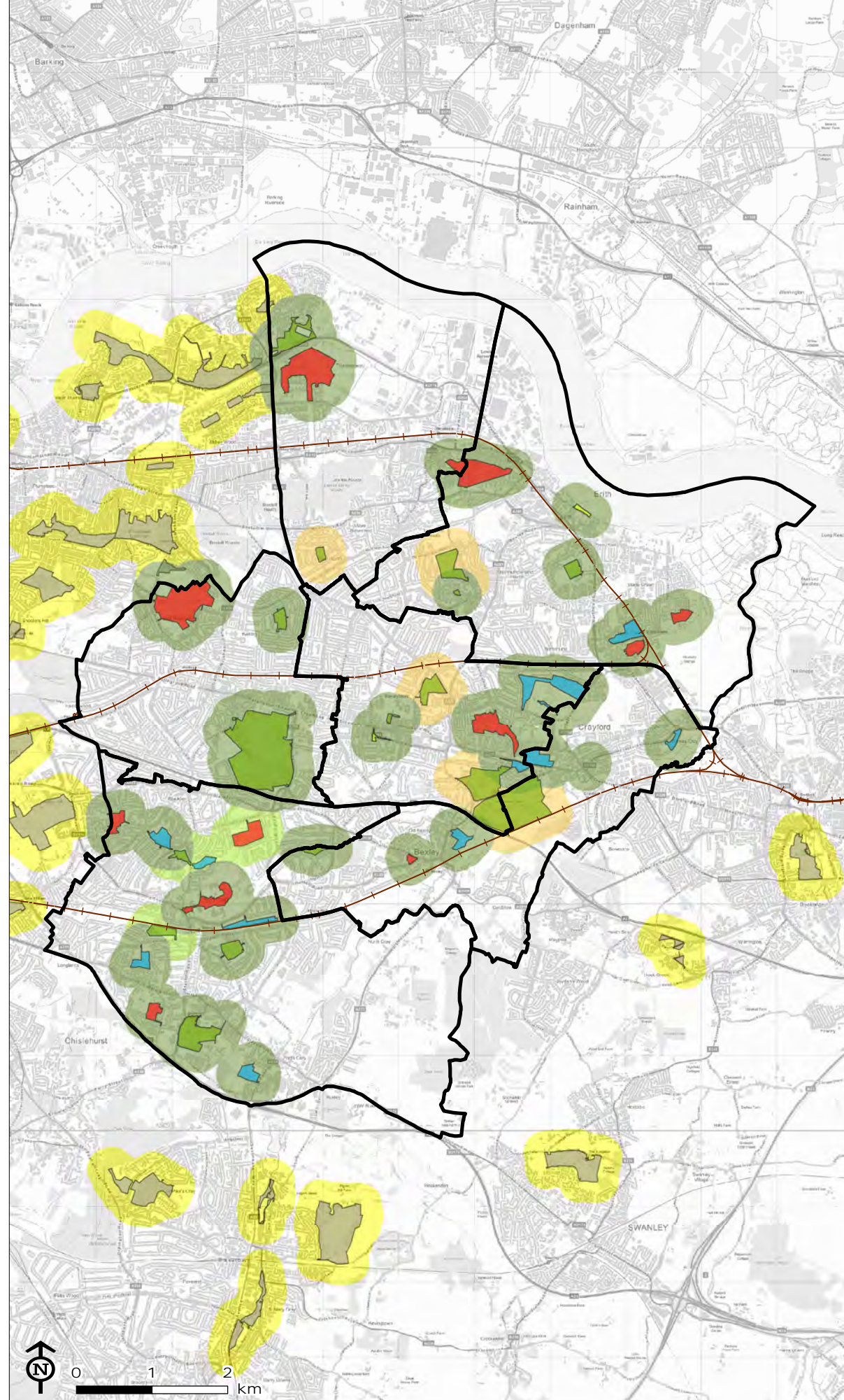
Bexley Green Infrastructure Study

Figure 6.42: Local open space access

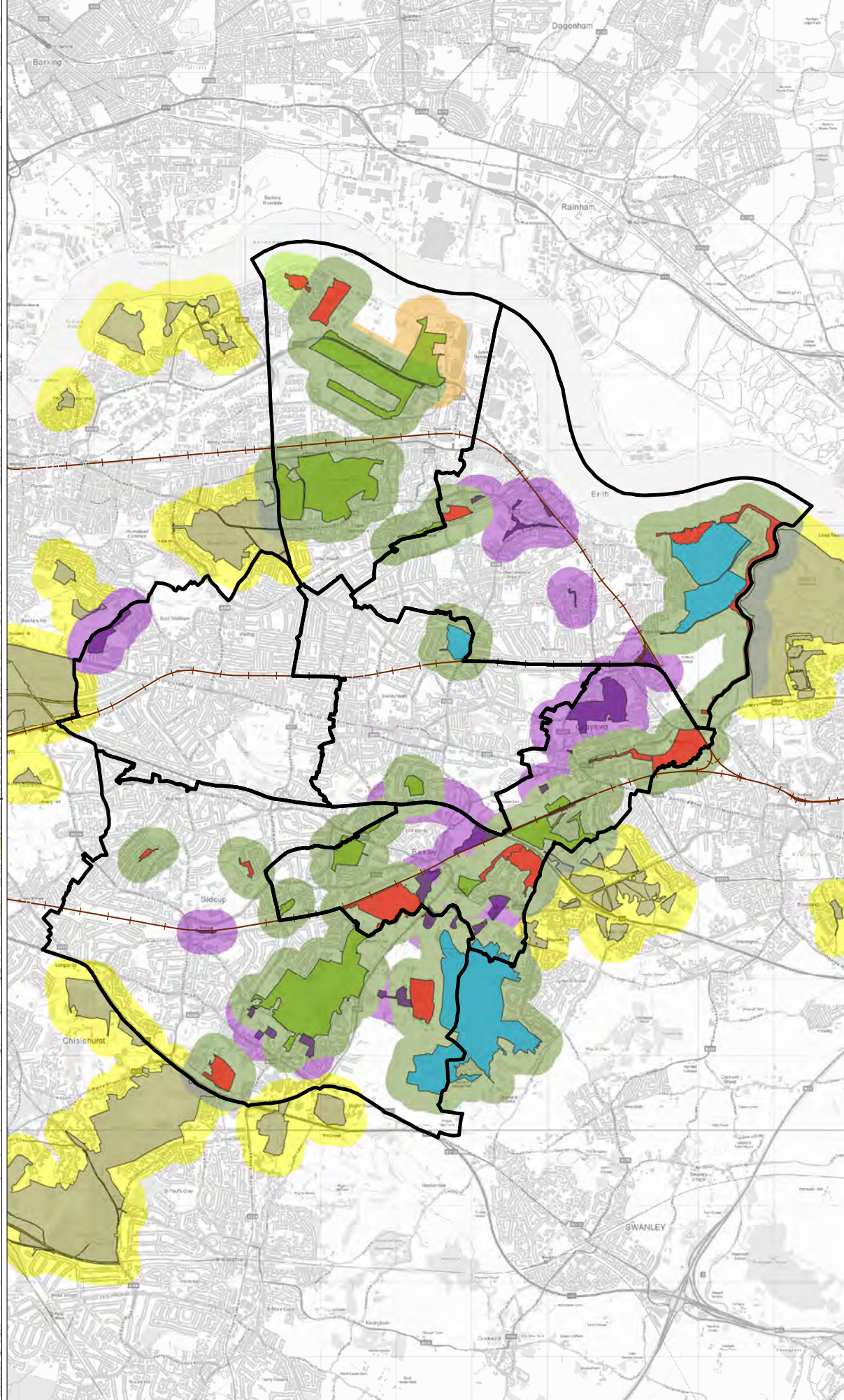
- Geographic Regions
- Railway lines that may act as barriers
- Open space quality and value
 - Higher quality, higher value
 - Higher quality, lower value
 - Lower quality, higher value
 - Lower quality, lower value
 - Open space with no public access
 - Open space outside Bexley
- 400 m accessibility catchment
 - Freely accessible to public
 - Freely accessible to public: opening hours
 - De facto public access
 - Majority freely accessible with some restricted areas
 - No public access
 - Catchment of sites outside Bexley



Parks and Gardens



Natural and Semi-Natural Green Space



Bexley Green Infrastructure Study

Figure 6.43: Small local open space access

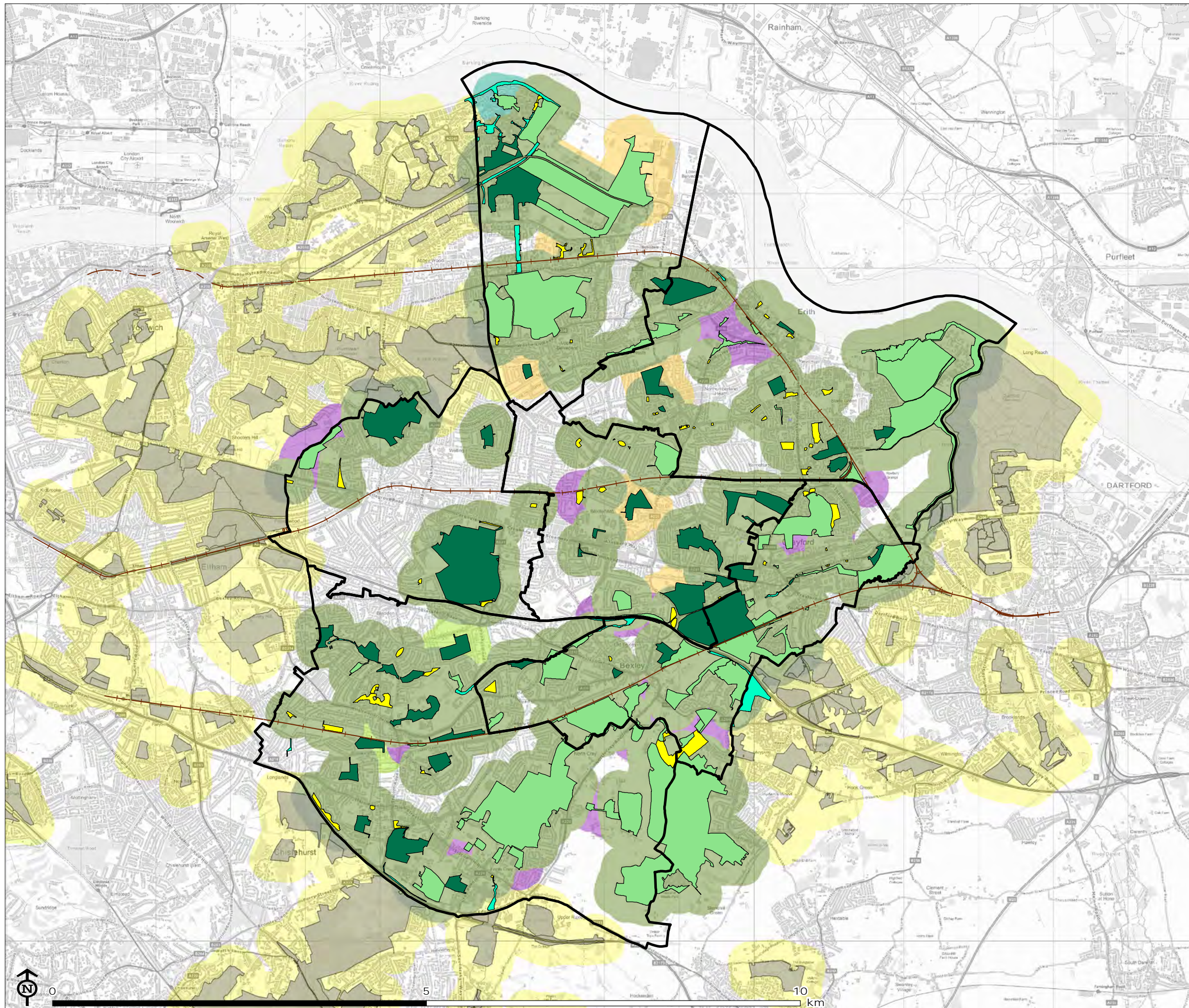
- Geographic Regions
- Railway lines that may act as barriers
- Open space quality and value
 - Higher quality, higher value
 - Higher quality, lower value
 - Lower quality, higher value
 - Lower quality, lower value
 - Open space with no public access
 - Open space outside borough
- 280 m accessibility catchment
 - Freely accessible to public
 - Freely accessible to public: opening hours
 - Majority freely accessible with some restricted areas
 - No public access
 - Catchment of sites outside Bexley

Map Scale @A3: 1:70,000



Bexley Green Infrastructure Study

Figure 6.44: Public open space access



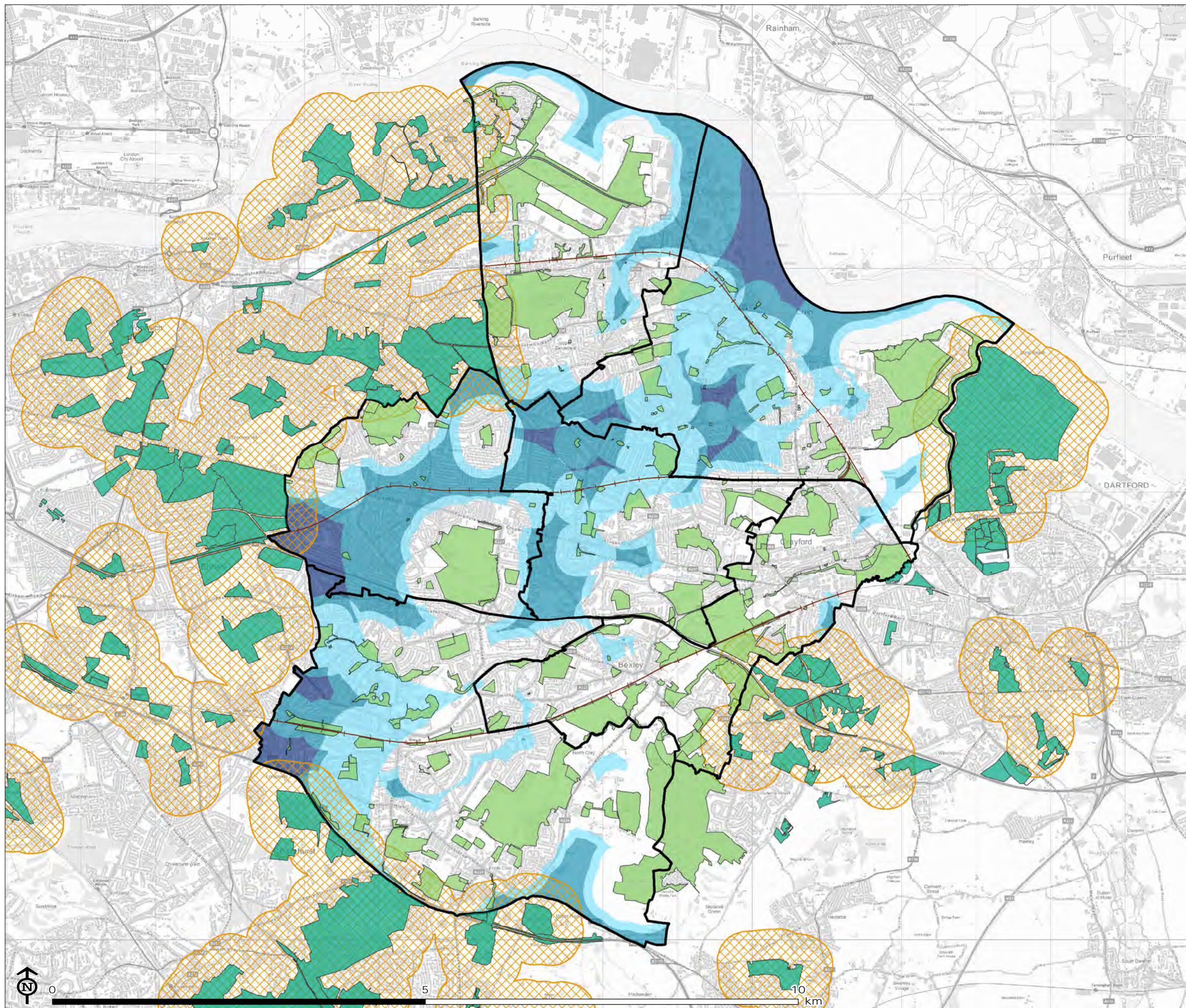
- Geographic Regions
- Railway lines that may act as barriers
- A: Parks and gardens
- B: Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces
- C: Linear open spaces
- D: Amenity green spaces
- Open space outside borough
- 280 m accessibility catchment
- Freely accessible to public
- Freely accessible to public: opening hours
- De facto public access
- Majority freely accessible with some restricted areas
- No public access
- Catchment of sites outside Bexley

Map Scale @A3: 1:50,000



Bexley Green Infrastructure Study

Figure 6.45: Combined deficiency in access to open space

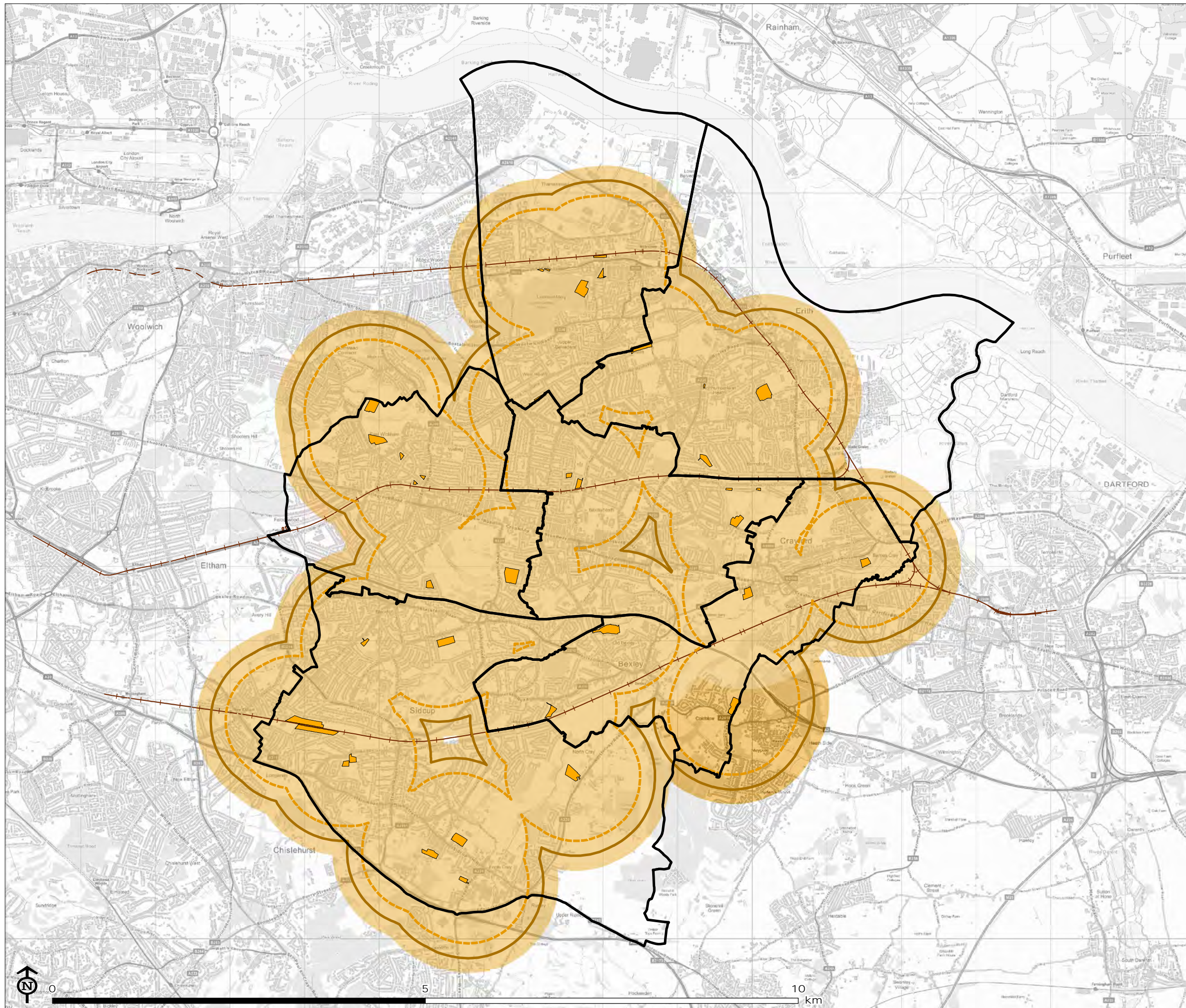


- Geographic regions
- Open space
- Railway lines that may act as barriers
- Deficient in access to:
 - 1 level of the open space hierarchy
 - 2 levels of the open space hierarchy
 - 3 levels of the open space hierarchy
 - Open space outside borough
 - 400 m accessibility buffer (open space outside borough)

Map Scale @A3: 1:50,000



Figure 6.46: Allotment Access



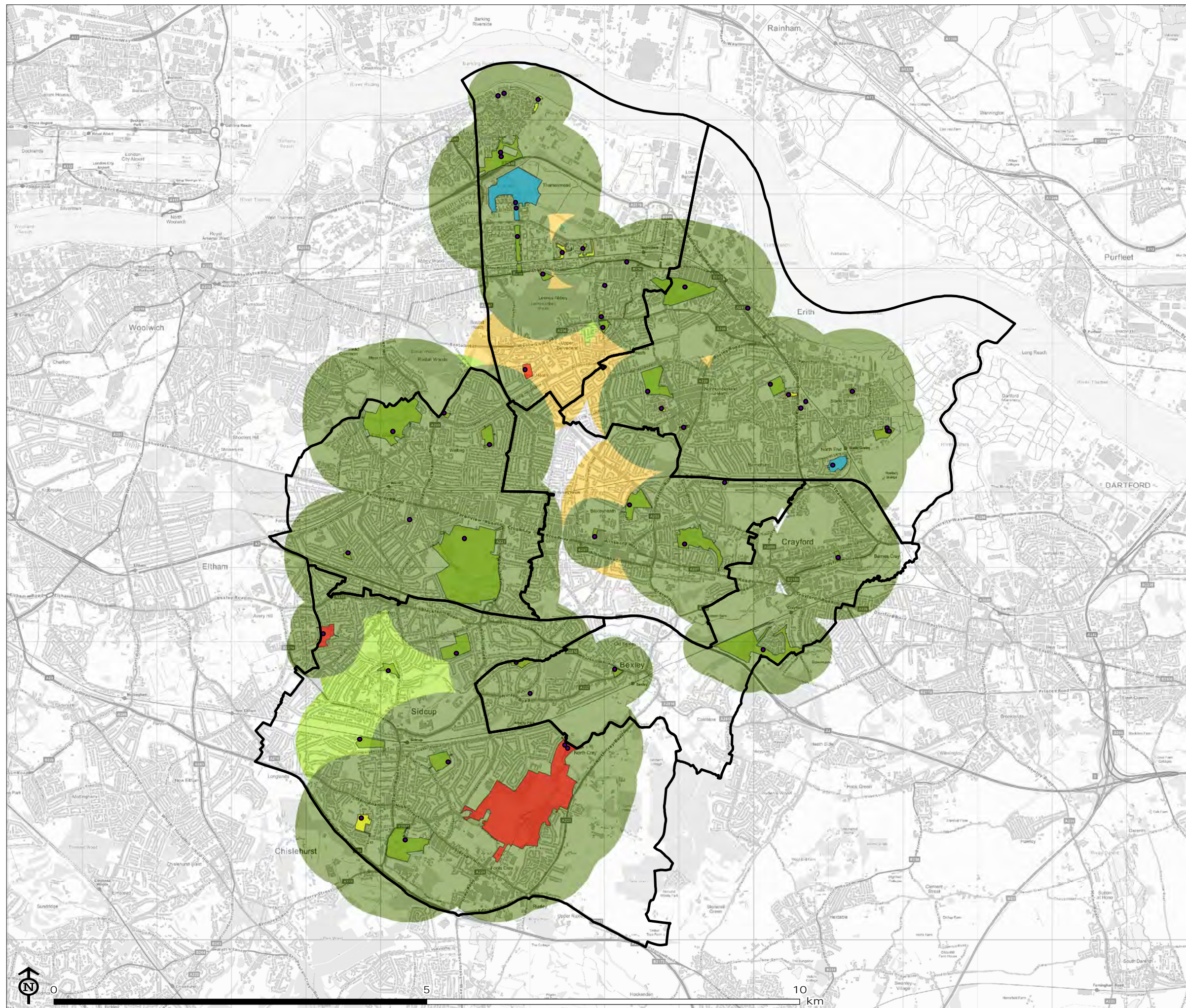
- Geographic regions
- Railway lines that may act as barriers
- Allotments
- 800 m accessibility catchment
- 1 km accessibility catchment
- 1.2 km accessibility catchment
- Restricted public access: members/tenants only

Map Scale @A3: 1:50,000



Bexley Green Infrastructure Study

Figure 6.47: Playable space access



- Geographic regions
- Play area
- Playable space quality and value
- Higher quality, higher value
- Higher quality, lower value
- Lower quality, higher value
- Lower quality, lower value
- Accessibility catchment
- Freely accessible to public
- Freely accessible to public: opening hours
- Majority freely accessible with some restricted areas

Map Scale @A3: 1:50,000



Summary of open space findings

The review of **all open space in the borough** (regardless of accessibility) revealed the following:

- The greatest quantity of open space in the borough is natural and semi-natural urban green space covering an area of 715 ha. This is followed by parks and gardens which cover an area of 375 ha. Overall (excluding sites with a primary typology of outdoor sports provision), there are 1,253ha of open space in the borough.
- Sidcup Geographic Region contains the greatest quantity of open space, followed by Belvedere with 311.1 ha and 259.6 ha respectively. In both of these areas, the majority is natural and semi-natural urban green space.
- Approximately 106ha of open space are not accessible to the public, the majority being natural and semi-natural urban green space.

The audit of the **publicly accessible open spaces** in Bexley identified the following:

- The greatest quantity of publicly accessible open space falls within the natural and semi-natural urban green space typology covering an area of 626.4 ha. This is followed by parks and gardens which cover an area of 375.0 ha (all are accessible).
- Sidcup Geographic Region contains the greatest quantity of publicly accessible open space, closely followed by Belvedere with 270.7 ha and 255.1 ha respectively. In both of these areas, the majority is natural and semi-natural urban green space.
- Welling Geographic Region lacks any natural and semi-natural urban green space and linear open spaces, but it does have the largest quantity of parks and gardens.
- Bexleyheath Geographic Region has the least amount of publicly accessible open space with 93.47ha, the vast majority of which is parks and gardens.
- Parks and gardens and cemeteries and churchyards scored consistently well in questions against the Green Flag Award's 'a welcoming place' criterion. Entrances, signage and access could be improved in all other typologies. Signage, although relatively consistent in design and size, was found to be too small and poorly placed in some instances; to the extent that at times signs were not noticeable.
- Some destination spaces are not well signposted from public transport hubs.

- Parks and gardens scored well against the Healthy, safe and secure theme. Amenity green spaces scored well in terms of having natural surveillance and feeling open and secure, but many sites did not have a good flow of people through the site to offer self-surveillance. Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces fared less well against this theme.
- Parks and gardens and cemeteries and churchyards scored consistently well in the Clean and well-maintained theme. A high number of sites did not have any planted areas at all. Grass areas were found to be in fair or good condition in most typologies – the exception being natural and semi-natural urban green spaces, but to some extent this is expected of these types of sites.
- A number of sites that were categorised as parks and gardens in the previous open space strategy (2008) have been re-categorised as amenity green spaces as a result of this audit. This is because they lack the range of facilities expected of this typology. This may be as a result of lack of maintenance over the intervening period and removal of facilities (such as benches, bins, planting).
- Conversely, some of the amenity green spaces, although small, have a good level of access and provision of basic facilities (including play areas).
- Footpaths could be improved in some sites, most notably in natural and semi-natural urban green spaces. The majority of buildings located within the borough's open spaces are considered to be in a 'good' or 'fair' condition, but in some cases it was not obvious whether they were in frequent use. A number of sites would benefit from footpath improvements and new footpaths to make sites more inclusive. There is potential for increasing access to and through linear open spaces.
- There is not much evidence of sustainable management practices within the borough's open spaces (this can be hard to identify) and not a lot of recycling bins were found. There was evidence of green waste composting on a large scale in one site. The council's term grounds contractor, who undertake grounds maintenance operations throughout the borough (including cleansing operations) do work to a specification that dictates that litter collected should be sorted and recycled at the Council's disposal site. In addition, all green waste generated from maintenance operations is taken the disposal site for processing.
- Whilst a good proportion of natural and semi-natural urban green spaces had evidence that natural features

are being managed for nature conservation, less than half of the parks and gardens had evidence of this. There is very little evidence of this in other typologies.

- There are a good number of community groups actively involved in the borough's open spaces. Only about 10% of the borough's open spaces had a permanent noticeboard, but where there was one, most were up to date.
- There is not a lot of public art within the borough's open spaces and very few show evidence of supporting programmes of cultural or community activities. In a diverse and changing borough, open spaces can provide opportunities for people of different cultures to come together.
- Quality and value varies throughout the borough, with lower quality and lower value sites more frequently occurring in the east of the borough, despite it enjoying greater levels of access to open space.
- There is **play provision** for all age groups in Bexley, the majority catering for the 5-11 age group. Most play equipment was found to be in good condition. This reflects the investment in play equipment by the Council in recent years.
- There are 48 other facilities for children and teenagers (or adults) across the borough. This includes ten green gyms, 20 MUGAs and a number of trim trails and wheels parks. All of these additional facilities were found to be in fair or good condition.
- The vast majority of allotment sites were found to be in 'good' condition with a smaller proportion in fair condition. No sites were identified as being in 'poor' condition, although some were noted to be declining. The 37 allotment sites support over 1,700 tenants.

The greatest deficiency in access to a range of open space hierarchies is within the following areas:

- Western sections of Erith, crossing over into Belvedere;
- The western half of Bexleyheath;
- The south western corner and central Welling;
- Western Sidcup;
- A small pocket east of Crayford Station; and
- A small pocket in Old Bexley.

Sections of communities in these areas do not have access to two or three levels of the open space hierarchy.

Two sites with no public access have the potential to provide open space access in areas of deficiency; most notably:

- Site 115: Wimpey Land, Dryden Road
- Site 90: Land at Perry Street

In quantitative terms, Bexleyheath, Erith and Welling have provision levels below the proposed standard. The eastern part of Erith Geographic Region has high levels of health and overall deprivation and childhood obesity and is an area of concern.

There are areas deficient in access to **allotments** in the north of the borough as well as in Sidcup and Welling Geographic Regions. Furthermore, while there is currently high demand for allotments in the borough, the high number (140) plots which are currently vacant in the Bexley suggests that there is likely to be a mismatch between the areas of demand and provision. The vast majority (26) of allotment sites were identified as being in 'good' condition. The remaining seven sites were identified as being in 'fair' condition with no sites identified as being in 'poor' condition. However, looking beyond the cultivated areas, some sites are scoring less well as a result of their access, signage and facilities.

In quantitative terms, provision in Belvedere, Bexleyheath and Erith is below the expected level of provision per head.

The majority of the borough's residents are within a catchment of a play space. The exceptions to this are:

- the north eastern corner of Belvedere;
- the north western and north eastern corners of Erith;
- the area to the north of Bexleyheath Station;
- southern parts of Bexleyheath Geographic Region into southern Crayford and Old Bexley Geographic Region; and
- Western Sidcup.

There is a good spread of play provision for all ages across the borough, but when measured against the standard of 10 square metres per child, provision is below the expected levels by a significant amount. Whilst not the lowest levels of provision in the borough, high childhood obesity levels coinciding with low per head play provision make this an area of concern both now and into the future as high levels of growth are expected here.

7 Playing Pitches Evidence Base



Chapter 7

Playing Pitches Evidence Base

This chapter sets out evidence on playing pitches and other outdoor sports in Bexley.

7.1 This chapter sets out the key findings of Stages B –C of the application of Sport England’s PPS Guidance: An Approach to Developing and Delivering a PPS 2013 in Bexley.

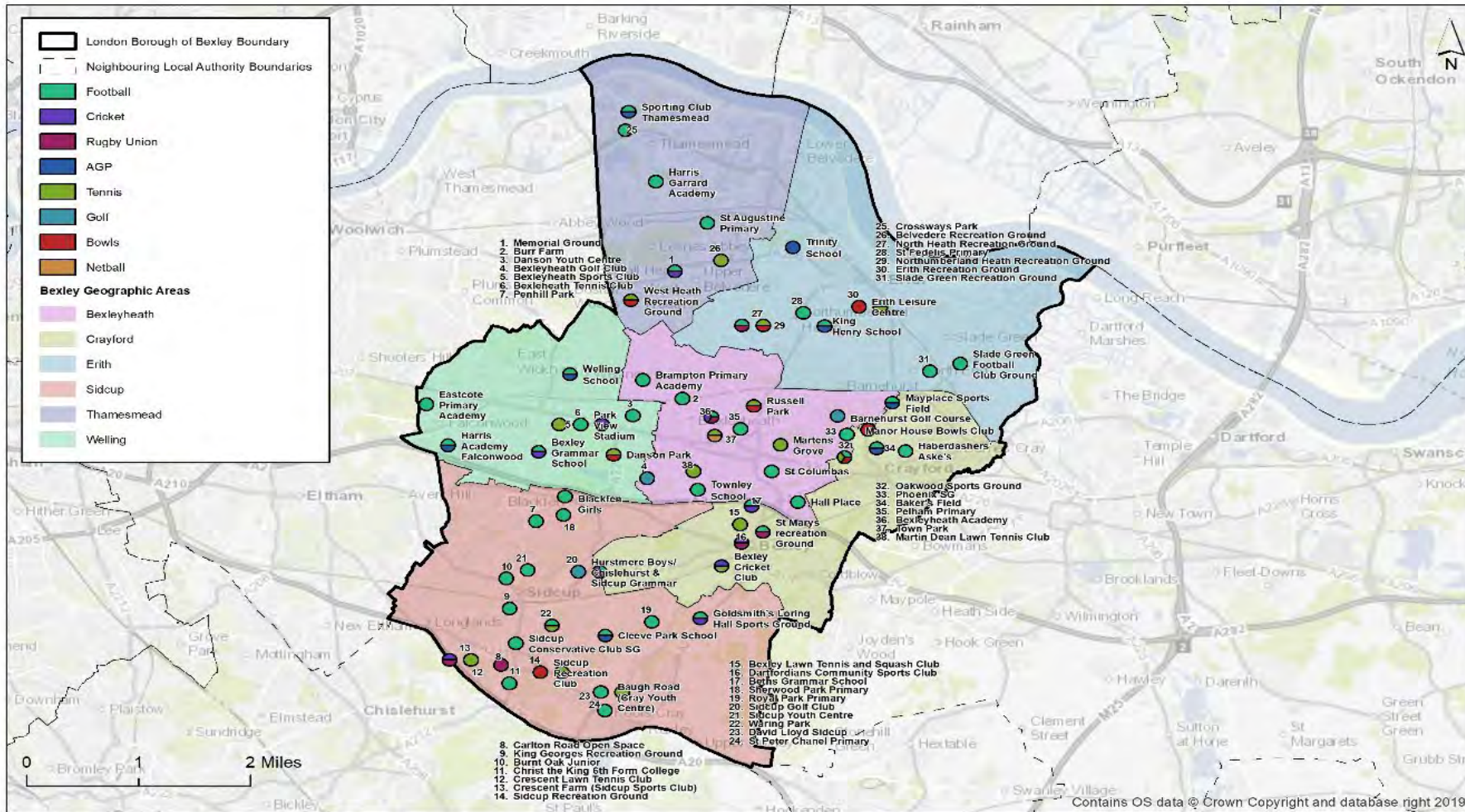
7.2 As set out in [Chapter 3](#), the playing pitches evidence base has been undertaken in line with the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework. It is considerate of existing outdoor sports provision including pitches and infrastructure along with the future need for such provision (irrespective of whether it is in public, private or educational ownership and regardless of the nature and level of use).

7.3 The future picture of provision has been assessed based on potential changes in supply (both committed and planned projects within the borough and its travel catchment), forecast changes in the resident population informed by the targets for new housing in Bexley’s adopted Growth Strategy 2020 to 2050, national trends in participation and the development aspirations of the clubs based in the borough.

7.4 A glossary of terms and abbreviations used in this chapter as well as a note of definitions of artificial pitch surfaces can be found in **Appendix H** of this report.

7.5 **Figure 7.1** shows the range of facilities assessed in this evidence base.

Figure 7.1: Existing playing pitch types by site in geographic areas



Cricket assessment

Table 7.1: Summary of findings for cricket

Cricket	
<p>The main characteristics of the current supply of and demand for provision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are 17 cricket pitches (of which 11 have fine turf squares). On a per capita basis, Bexley ranks lower than its neighbouring boroughs, with the exception of Greenwich. ■ Most of the supply is in the central/southern areas of the borough. The north of the borough - which is the most densely populated and has the largest proportion of BAME residents - has the least provision. A third of the recreational playing base nationally, and over 40% of Champions Trophy Ticket purchasers, are of South Asian origin. The ECB want to foster the extraordinary passion for cricket among South Asian audiences ■ There are no public cricket pitches in the borough. ■ Demand for the traditional club model of cricket is sustaining well in the borough relative to the national trend, with two clubs experiencing recent growth in the number of Saturday teams. Four clubs are based at secured grounds in distinct town areas - Sidcup, Bexley, Bexleyheath and Belvedere. A fifth club, Old Dartfordians, and Bexley Park Cricket Club (on the borough boundary in Dartford) have secured grounds serving demand for club cricket in the Crayford area. All clubs compete in Kent Cricket adult and junior leagues. ■ The borough also hosts a nomadic club (Bexley Tamil CC) with two teams playing outside the borough in the British Tamil Cricket League. ■ Together, the clubs run 49 teams of which 27 are juniors. Junior cricket demand is strong in the borough due in large part to Kent Community Cricket and Bexley Cricket Coaching. Together, these organisations provide a wide range of cricket opportunities for boys and girls at the clubs and within schools. Currently, there are no women's teams in the borough although development activities for women are taking place. ■ The two largest clubs - Bexley and Bexleyheath - are bucking the national trend of decline in the number of men's Saturday league teams, both clubs running more teams in 2018 than five years ago.
<p>Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet current demand?</p>	<p>NO – not sufficient sites are in secured use as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The overall supply of fine turf pitches in Bexley borough is broadly in balance. However, whilst there is spare capacity at some grounds these pitches are either not accessible or secured. The fine turf cricket pitch supply on school and college playing fields in Bexley borough (where community use is largely not secured) accounts for just over a third (35%) of the total supply. ■ As a consequence, demand from two Bexleyheath CC league teams in the peak Saturday afternoon period is exported to two pitches in RB Greenwich. In addition, Bexley Tamils CC teams also travel outside the borough to find suitable pitches (LB Bromley). ■ Securing continued community access to pitches on education sites - and most particularly the two pitches at Goldsmiths College's Loring Hall Sports Ground beyond a current agreement with Bexley Cricket Club to 2021 - is therefore critical to continue to meet demand at current levels. ■ Investment in enhancing the quality of the pitches and ancillary facilities at Chislehurst & Sidcup School and/or Beths School (linked to secured community access at affordable charges) may also be options to address the current displacement of teams from Bexleyheath CC and Bexley Tamils CC.
<p>Is the provision that is accessible of sufficient quality and appropriately maintained?</p>	<p>Variable standards as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The quality of the fine turf pitches in the borough supply is mixed. However, the dedicated cricket ground pitches at the two largest clubs - Bexley CC and Bexleyheath CC - are maintained to a high quality and the two pitches at the Goldsmith's College Loring Hall Sports Ground are improving through to 'good' from 'standard' quality through a process of enhancement works by the College grounds staff with advice and funding support from the club.

Cricket	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At Dartfordians and Sidcup, the outfielders are uneven due to ground share arrangements at these with rugby clubs at these sites. There is no spare land capacity on either site to resolve this issue.
<p>What are the main characteristics of the future supply and demand for provision?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assuming current cricket 'team generation rates' (i.e. the number of residents in the prime cricket age groups in the borough population per existing cricket team), and the forecast population growth to 2036 in these age groups, it can be calculated that demand for 6 additional teams will be generated (2 men's, 3 boys, 1 girls). In addition, over this period it is reasonable to assume that a minimum of two women's teams will be established at the larger clubs through a combination of development activity aimed at retaining existing girls and converting latent demand. There are no current proposals for increasing the supply of cricket pitches. However, opportunities are likely to arise in association with the roll out of the Council's Growth Strategy, subject to improvements to the borough's transport infrastructure - e.g. new public open spaces and schools with secure playing fields.
<p>Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet future demand?</p>	<p>NO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The future assessment indicates a need for at least one additional large fine turf cricket pitch (16 wickets plus an NTP) maintained to a 'good' standard, or two smaller pitches (8 wickets plus an NTP). Requirement would be 2ha including square, outfield parking and pavilion for each cricket ground. The latter would provide greater capacity and flexibility of match programming in the peak period. Provision of two new pitches could also help to address the current imbalance in distribution of supply to improve accessibility to cricket for residents in the north of the borough where there is currently the least supply. Provision of new secondary school playing fields to support delivery of the Growth Strategy for the borough are likely to provide opportunities to deliver against this need and secure community use. The existing playing field at Harris Academy Erith (in the north) may also offer potential. As identified in consultation with the Bexley Cricket Development Group, there is a strong preference for secured sites (fenced club or education grounds) as opposed to open parks spaces where there are particular challenges to maintain and protect the quality of fine turf pitches.

Football assessment

Table 7.2: Summary of findings for football

Football	
<p>The main characteristics of the <u>current</u> supply of and demand for provision</p>	<p><u>Grass pitches and 3G Football turf Pitches (FTPs)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When comparing the number of football pitches in the 6 neighbouring boroughs. Bexley, with 148 grass pitches on 81 playing fields sites, ranks the second lowest after Greenwich in terms of the total number of pitches (of all sizes) per capita. A further 16 parks and open spaces have maintained open grass amenity areas suitable and used for a range of ball sports including football mainly on an informal basis, although some are also used for team training or mini soccer coaching. There is a high level of reliance on unsecured football pitches on education sites. 49 pitches, across 24 school and college sites. The distribution of grass pitches is reasonably even across most parts of the borough. The northern areas from Thamesmead in the west to Slade Green in the east have the least accessible supply. Adult demand for Saturday league football has declined over recent seasons in line with the national trend although adult demand for Sunday morning football remains stable.

Football	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The borough has a large number of clubs in the National League System (NLS) relative to most local authority areas. Bexley has 5 stadium pitches and 8 NLS clubs with origins in the borough. Three are currently playing at stadia in neighbouring boroughs. The club playing at the highest level in the NLS, Welling United (Step 2), has current ambitions to substantially enhance the Park View Stadium pitch and ancillary facilities. Erith Town (Step 5) has ambitions to secure land in Erith or Belvedere to develop its own facilities. ■ Demand continues to thrive and grow in the youth age groups driven by large Charter Standard youth football clubs and the successful Selkent league, most particularly in the age groups that play on 7v7, 9v9 and youth 11v11 size pitches. ■ There is a lot of cross borough boundary movement of youth teams for match play and training (examples include Junior Reds from Charlton playing at several Bexley sites, Parkwood Rangers with origins in Bexley, playing in Bexley Park Dartford and training at Goals in Bexleyheath. Welling Youth from the borough and playing in Plumstead). ■ Opportunities for women and girls to play league football are growing steadily within a number of high quality community clubs in Bexley supported by new FA initiatives and the development of league structures. Girls Selkent fixtures are also on Sunday mornings which increases the demand pressure on youth pitches at this time. ■ Several large junior clubs are spread across multiple sites in the borough for home games which compromises both their social cohesion/club identity and their financial sustainability by impacting on secondary income potential. Examples include Footscray Lions, Junior Reds, Parkwood Rangers, Kingsdale and Slade Green Knights. ■ Bexley has three full size FA registered approved 3G FTPs with full community access in the peak hours - SC Thamesmead, Danson Sports and Harris Academy Falconwood. ■ The secured and FA approved 3G FTPs supply for match play is augmented by a further full size 3G FTP at King Henry School, Erith (non FA registered approved) and 13 smaller 3G FTPs and sand based AGPs, mainly on school sites. ■ There are currently no large 3G FTPs (i.e with a playing area of more than 450m2) in Slade Green or the Belvedere geographic areas or in Sidcup in the south. ■ Demand for informal, unaffiliated small-sided games (both in friendly and commercial small sided football leagues) is strong supported by the supply of Goals Soccer Centres in Bexleyheath and small sided leagues at Danson Sports and SC Thamesmead. Outer Borough provision for small sided games are in Eltham, and at Coldharbour Leisure Centre and Crown Woods Academy in Greenwich borough. Both these venues are easily accessible by car from Bexley. ■ New opportunities for disabled and/or older residents to play football e.g. walking football sessions are now being delivered in Bexley, based at 3G pitches. This is being achieved through a number of agencies notably Charlton Athletic Community Trust (CACT), Bexley Deaf Centre, the Borough Council and the FA.
<p>Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet <u>current demand</u>?</p>	<p>NO, not in peak period and access to Education sites is unsecured as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Whilst the overall quantity of supply of football pitches in the borough is sufficient to meet current demand, this is not the case in the peak period, most particularly for youth 11v11 football on Sunday mornings and for NLS Step Level football on Saturday afternoons. ■ There is a current shortfall of approximately 24 pitches at peak time for youth 11v11 football based on all youth 11 v 11 playing on the correct size pitch and available supply in the peak period. The shortfall is greater when unmet and displaced demand is taken into account. ■ Access to pitches on education and youth centre playing fields play a vital role in meeting community demand currently. The unsecured nature of this access is a concern for the future. Several school and youth centre sites accommodate a significant amount of junior match play. Examples include Danson Youth Centre (Junior Reds),

Football	
	<p>Haberdasher Askes School and Bexley Grammar School (Kingsdale), King Henry School (Phoenix FC Juniors), Sidcup Youth Centre (Footscray Lions U15), Cleeve Park School (Fastfield). Any loss of availability at these sites to youth 11v11, 9v9 or 7v7 pitches would upset the current delicate balance of pitch supply and demand on Sunday mornings for Selkent and other youth league fixtures along with adult Sunday morning league football.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Some schools offer potential to secure more supply in the peak Sunday morning period in future. Beth's Grammar School for example has extensive playing fields, is open to the principle of extending community use of its site, and offers good potential to increase the secured supply linked to grant investment and/or a planning gain. ■ There is a clear need to protect the overall quantity of playing pitch land in the borough whether or not it is in current use. Sites that have been disused have been included in the Playing Pitch Audit. As such, disused playing field land (e.g. at Slade Green and Burr Farm) needs to be retained or replaced. Similarly, playing fields at primary schools need to be protected regardless of whether they are currently made available for community use out of hours.
<p>Is the provision that is accessible of sufficient quality and appropriately maintained?</p>	<p>Variable standards as such:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The quality of the grass pitch supply is mixed. Of the 55 secured pitches on the 20 parks or club managed sites across the borough, 13 (24%) rated 'good' on a non-technical visual assessment, 34 (62%) as 'standard' and 8 (14%) as 'poor'. ■ Improving the quality of selected standard pitches to good (or poor to standard) would provide more playing capacity in the peak weekend periods although, with such a large proportion of demand falling on Sunday mornings, increased capacity could only be achieved through programming back to back kick off times. ■ Whilst the ancillary facilities at some sites are of the highest quality - e.g. Hall Place, SC Thamesmead - some of the pavilions at the smaller park sites that attract heavy use for youth football (e.g. Waring Park and Slade Green Recreation Ground) are poor and in need of replacement. ■ At some school sites with established community use of pitches, pitch side shelter/kit store and toilets are needed (for example Bexley Grammar School to keep mud out of school sports hall changing rooms). ■ Future investment in sustaining or enhancing quality needs to be focused on key football sites in the borough that are accessible, accommodate multiple teams (or have real potential to do so with enhancement) and can sustain good quality ancillary facilities. Key football sites identified through the research include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Stadium sites - SC Thamesmead, Erith LC, Oakwood VCD, Welling Park View, Phoenix Sports Ground – Multi pitch community club football sites - Mayplace (Danson Sports), Bakers Field (Crayford Arrows), Bexley Park on boundary (Parkwood Rangers) – Multi pitch park sites - Hall Place, Slade Green RG, King George RG, North Heath RG, Crossways. – Education sites - Danson YC, Cleeve Park School, Haberdashers Askes Crayford, Harris Garrard Academy, Erith School, Beths School.
<p>What are the main characteristics of the future supply and demand for provision?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assuming current football 'team generation rates' it can be calculated that demand for approximately 28 additional teams will be generated by 2036 requiring additional playing capacity. In reality, this is likely to be an under-estimate in view of the rapid growth trend in girls and women's football and the focus of the FA's new strategy on growing female participation. ■ The largest increases are forecast in the age groups that play on youth pitches (youth 11v11 and 9v9). These are the pitch sizes where there is currently the least supply. ■ As more unmet and latent demand for youth football - particularly girls' football - identified in the aspirations of the main Charter Standard clubs in the borough - is realised, this will increase the pressure on the existing supply of junior pitches which are already oversubscribed on Sunday mornings in the peak period.

Football	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The balance of demand between natural turf and artificial turf pitches over the local plan period is likely to change as the current demand trend (both for adult play and in the transition youth to adult age group) continues the trend away from formal league football towards more informal game formats of shorter duration and leagues promoting competition in small sided teams. ■ The supply of 3G FTPs is also likely to increase as school sites seek to maximise hire income potential of their AGPs by resurfacing from sand to 3G FTPs This has real risk of impacting on the balance of supply of AGPs for hockey in the borough (see Table 7.3).
<p>Is there enough accessible and secured provision to meet <u>future</u> demand?</p>	<p>NO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The assessment supports the case for provision of further pitch capacity in the borough by 2036 with the north east of the borough the Slade Green and Belvedere geographic areas a particular hotspot. ■ Securing more youth 11v11 pitches football pitches is a clear priority need from the needs evidence and is likely to require a combination of strategies - e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Securing new provision on new secondary school playing fields (proposed as part of the borough's Growth Strategy). – Conversion of existing under-used senior pitches on park sites to youth 11v11 or mark youth pitches on suitable areas on park sites that are no longer marked out. – Securing community use agreements through grant or planning conditions. – Consider options with site operators and the local youth football leagues to programme some youth league fixtures on Saturdays to spread demand more evenly over the Peak Period. ■ Consider options to transfer more competitive football on Sunday mornings to 3G FTPs as the supply of FA approved 3G FTPs increases. Opportunities include: Cleeve Park School and Erith Quarry. Potential for new provision with community use agreements at proposed new secondary schools (Growth Strategy). ■ There is a shortfall in supply of FA registered quality 3G FTPs in the borough. The FA Training Scenario shows a shortfall of 2 FA approved full size 3G FTPs in the borough at current team numbers. By 2036, the evidence suggests there will be a need for a further 2 3G FTPs to FA approved specification. ■ To transfer all current match play on Council managed natural turf pitches to 3G (i.e. the FA match play scenario) would necessitate 7 FA registered 3G FTPs in addition to the current supply of 3 FA registered and 1 non-FA registered 3G FTPs in the borough.

Hockey assessment

Table 7.3: Summary of findings for hockey

Football	
<p>The main characteristics of the <u>current</u> supply of and demand for provision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bexley currently has 2 full size floodlit AGPs suitable for formal hockey both on school sites. There is a further school Trinity with an under-size floodlit AGP that is suitable but currently unused for informal hockey. However, the under size pitch is not suitable for competitive hockey. ■ There has been growth in participation in hockey in the Bexley area since 2012. Over 500 people play formal hockey as members of one of the two borough-based clubs - Burnt Ash HC and Bexleyheath & Belvedere HC. ■ Increased growth in participation has centred mainly on Burnt Ash Hockey club, which in 2017/18 season ran 8 senior men's teams, 7 senior women's teams and a junior section of 165 players. ■ Both clubs rely on unsecured access to the school sites for matches at weekends and for training on weekday evenings and on Sunday mornings.

Football	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are significant levels of unmet and latent demand for hockey participation in the borough and under-developed opportunities to play informal hockey without joining one of the two clubs.
Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet <u>current</u> demand?	<p>NO.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the loss of the King Henry School second pitch and the conversion of the Harris Falconwood Academy pitch to 3G FTPs in the summer of 2018, there has been a substantial impact on the two clubs ability to provide the formal side of hockey in Bexley (particularly for juniors on Sundays). The lack of security of access for Burnt Ash Hockey Club to the pitch at Hurstmere School is also a concern.
Is the provision that is accessible of sufficient quality and appropriately maintained?	<p>NO.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All the full size supply needs resurfacing and floodlighting needs to be enhanced/repared at both clubs main sites. The ancillary changing and social facilities are also very limited at both the main school sites used by the clubs for their home fixtures and training.
What are the main characteristics of the <u>future</u> supply and demand for provision?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A minimum of a further 4 hockey teams will be generated by current forecasts of population growth in the borough over the Local Plan period to 2036. The growth in informal hockey will potentially lead to more league teams in the future. Without further pitch supply and availability of the Hurstmere pitch on Sundays, this demand will not be met. New hockey use will need to be secured at the Trinity School pitch to accommodate likely growth in informal hockey participation in the borough. This pitch is too small to accommodate hockey match play.
Is there enough accessible and secured provision to meet <u>future</u> demand?	<p>NO.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From the assessment, it is clear that neither hockey club in the borough has sufficient secured community use at the school pitches they access currently. Population growth and trends in hockey both nationally and locally is likely to increase the deficiency in secured supply to 2036. The priority need from 2018/19 is to protect the remaining pitches suitable for formal hockey, together with the slots for match play and training time available to the two clubs at these venues. New provision of a further hockey pitch is required to give a supply of 3 compliant pitches in the borough with community use secured in the peak period for hockey matches and training. Considering that the trend for facilities based at education sites is to replace sand based pitches with 3G and further new provision at school sites needs to be properly secured or; consideration should be given to new provision being club based.

Rugby assessment

Table 7.4: Summary of findings for rugby

Rugby	
The main characteristics of the <u>current</u> supply of and demand for provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are currently 16 senior rugby pitches in Bexley borough across 12 sites (2 secured club sites, a University Sports Ground, 3 public parks and 6 secondary schools. (This total excludes the Christ the King 6th Form College site where a former pitch is no longer marked or maintained). A further 6 youth rugby pitches are provided across 3 secondary school sites. There are no rugby compliant artificial grass pitches in Bexley borough. The quantity of senior rugby pitches in the borough ranks Bexley 5th out of 6 in comparison with the six nearest local authorities.

Rugby	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 8 senior pitches (half the supply) is secured for community use –4 pitches on two sports club association owned sports grounds and 4 on public park sites. The distribution of secured club pitches is good with provision in the south (Sidcup), in the central Bexley area (Dartfordians) and in the north at North Heath Recreation Ground (Erith RFC). ■ Total adult membership across the three borough based clubs is therefore in the order of 325 adult males, 50 adult females, 465 junior boys and 245 minis (mixed but mainly boys). ■ Both the larger clubs Sidcup and Dartfordians report growth in membership over recent seasons and aspirations for further growth subject to securing more playing pitch capacity.
<p>Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet <u>current</u> demand?</p>	<p>NO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Due to sharing of pitches with cricket at both Dartfordians and Sidcup club grounds some demand is displaced, most particularly at the beginning and end of the rugby season (e.g. pre-season games and training). ■ Dartfordians have recently addressed this shortfall by securing long-term access to an adjacent pitch on a public recreation ground under terms of a Management Agreement with the Council. This club also hires pitches and the sports hall at a school close by (Beth's) for juniors and minis on Sunday mornings when its own pitches are not playable. ■ The Sidcup club does not have sufficient playing pitch capacity on its own site. This club also makes use of a Council pitch on an adjacent site on a hired basis but requires more secure capacity to meet current demand.
<p>Is the provision that is accessible of sufficient quality and appropriately maintained?</p>	<p>Variable as;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The pitches at Dartfordians Club Sports Ground drain poorly and have to be closed to play on several weekends in most seasons. This impacts substantially on the finances of the club. The RFU has allocated grant funds to improve the main pitch in its current capital programme. The second pitch is affected by the canopy of mature trees along the far touchline which blocks sunlight from reaching the pitch. ■ Maintenance of the pitches is generally satisfactory; undertaken by trained club members or by contractors as necessary with support and advice provided by the RFU Pitch Advisor.
<p>What are the main characteristics of the <u>future</u> supply and demand for provision?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assuming current rugby 'team generation rates', and the forecast population growth to 2036 in these age groups, it can be calculated that demand for approximately 6-7 additional teams will be generated requiring additional playing capacity. ■ There is likely to be a need to secure a minimum of 2 additional full size grass pitches by the end of the Local Plan period. ■ This estimate is likely to be a little understated as it does not take into account the aspirations of the two larger clubs to expand opportunities for girls and women to play rugby subject to securing additional playing pitch capacity.
<p>Is there enough accessible and secured provision to meet <u>future</u> demand?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A new rugby 3G World Regulation 22 compliant pitch will be available at Footscray (Greenwich Borough) in 2018. This site is accessible from Bexley borough and has potential to accommodate displaced pre-season rugby demand from Bexley clubs. A further 3G world Regulation 22 compliant pitch proposal is submitted for planning at Stone Lodge Dartford. This proposal, if implemented, will also provide capacity to address future demand from team growth driven by population change in Bexley borough as well as providing suitable venues for festivals and the development of informal 7 a side rugby products.

Other outdoor sports assessment

7.6 The following are the key issues of the other sports assessed using the Sport England Assessing Needs and Opportunities guidance.

Tennis Key Findings

7.7 The Lawn Tennis Association does not have a model in place to evidence there is a sufficient quantity of tennis courts in Bexley borough to meet current demand to play tennis both within the more organised club environment and for informal play in parks. However, the Lawn Tennis Association believe the number of courts in Bexley will cover the potential demand.

7.8 The number of courts is also likely to be adequate to meet demand over the life of the new Local Plan to 2036.

7.9 Although all the park courts in Bexley borough are free to access (apart from Danson Park at weekends in the summer holidays), many of the park courts are of insufficient quality to attract significant levels of community use. The best quality public hard courts are those in Danson Park and Sidcup Place. The Danson Park and Sidcup Place courts have been rated as 'standard' quality and require enhancement and remarking to LTA dimension specifications for courts and run offs.

7.10 The distribution of tennis courts available to the community across the borough is reasonably good. The area with the least provision is Crayford where a proportion of residents live more than a 10- minute walk from a park tennis court. Crayford residents are served by the Oakwood tennis club at the VCD sports ground and by courts in Dartford to the East (e.g. Bexley Park) and to the West in Bexleyheath.

7.11 Although the quantity of tennis court supply is likely to be sufficient, and a high proportion of the supply is on park sites where the courts are freely available to use, this is tempered due to issues of quality and the lack of lighting. Investment is needed into the upkeep or improvements of publicly accessible courts whilst the new LTA online booking platform and Gate Access technology could help measure the demand at sites and help make the courts sustainable.

Netball Key Findings

7.12 Many Bexley-residents are leaving the borough to play netball - e.g. in Bromley, Sevenoaks, Medway - as Bexley lacks a netball facility with appropriate lighting and infrastructure. Consequently the provision of good quality facilities and competition in Bexley (i.e. at a level above social leagues) is lacking.

7.13 The England Netball representative for Bexley Borough considers that should a facility of similar scale and quality to

that at Bromley High and Rainham School for Girls be made available in Bexley, there would be regular bookings from clubs, leagues, London Sport, the KCSSA FE Sport body, Kent Netball and England Netball. The ideal facility would be a netball centre (with a minimum of 3 floodlit courts, changing facilities and on site car parking). The need for a three court netball site was highlighted in the last PPS.

Bowls Key Findings

7.14 There are 9 fine turf bowling greens in Bexley borough at 8 sites. Danson Park, the primary park provision, has 2 adjacent fine turf greens.

7.15 6 bowls facilities on public park sites are leased by the Borough Council to clubs or to a consortium of bowls clubs in that area. The leases at Avenue Road, North Heath and West Heath have expired and renewals are in progress. Those at Danson Park and Crayford Manor and Russell Park are due to expire in 2019 so will also require renewal shortly. There is a need to consider a wider review of the assets in 2019 and look at the options for park hub sites where appropriate.

7.16 The remaining two facilities are on sites owned by sports and social clubs - Sidcup Recreation SSC and the Vickers SSC at Oakwood in Crayford.

7.17 Even at the most heavily used sites, when allowance is made for the proportion of the total membership who will be non-playing social members or only play occasionally, demand from regular players can be accommodated within the Bowls England benchmark of 60 regular players per 6 rink green.

7.18 While membership data is incomplete, it evident that several greens are operating close to the margins of viability and sustainability. There is clear spare capacity at a number of the eight bowls greens sites in the borough based on the Bowls England benchmark of comfortable capacity.

Golf Key Findings

7.19 The England Golf representative for Bexley Borough considers the current golf facility supply provides a good level of opportunities for new players and low cost opportunities to play golf to increase accessibility to all in a relatively densely populated area.

7.20 The in-borough supply is augmented by the Sidcup Family Golf Centre (former World of Golf venue) located nearby adjacent to the Sidcup By Pass with a two tier 46 bay floodlit range, practice range and several golf professionals providing lessons.

7.21 All three courses in the borough are pitched at golf entry level offering 9 hole courses, flexible access and dress codes

and providing coaching and, practice facilities (particularly at Barnehurst with the driving range).

7.22 There is one disused golf course in the borough Riverside Golf Course Thamesmead 9-hole course. It closed in December 2013.

7.23 There is also a good level of supply of more traditional 18-hole members' courses and clubs within easy access for Bexley borough residents.

7.24 While the assessment suggests quite high levels of unmet and latent demand for golf in the borough, all three courses in Bexley borough have substantial capacity for more members as evidenced by the fact they all comfortably sustained larger memberships five to ten years ago.

Current and future demand for playing pitches

7.25 Table 7.5 identifies the current and future demand for playing pitch sports and the geographic areas that new pitch sports are required as part of developer contributions.

7.26 When considering the number of pitches and pavilions required from new developments in the future, Sport England's New Development Calculator tool should be used in conjunction with consultation with LB Bexley's Playing Pitch Audit Steering Group to ensure that the correct and current information is applied to the Sport England New Development Calculator Tool.

Table 7.5: Current and future Demand playing pitch sports and Geographic Area required

Sport	Current Demand - Need	Future Provision - Need	Geographic Area – Future Need
Adult Football 11 v 11	Adult 11 v 11 – Current demand is being met for adult football.	Population growth to 2036 and team generation rates predict a need for 5 adult 11 v 11 pitches to be provided based on growth projections 2019 -2036.	5 new adult 11 v 11 good quality pitches based on growth projections - Thamesmead and Erith
Youth Football 11 v 11	Current shortfall of 24 pitches at peak time on a Sunday morning.	Population growth to 2036 and team generation rates predict the need for 8 Youth football 11 v 11 pitches to be provided based on growth projections 2019 and 2036. These 8 youth 11 v 11 pitches will assist in meeting the future shortfall of 42 youth 11 v 11 pitches. The shortfall of 42 pitches at peak time of play can be met by providing 14 good quality pitches that can provide for up to 3 matches back to back at the peak time of play. The 14 youth 11 v 11 pitches could be provided by the 8 new housing development pitches, Improving quality of the 3 existing youth 11 v 11 pitches and reconfiguration of 3 spare adult 11 v 11 pitches.	8 new youth 11 v 11 good quality pitches based on growth projections – Thamesmead and Erith
Junior Football 9 v 9	Shortfall of 11 pitches at peak time of play.	Population growth to 2036 and team generation rates predict the need for 2 Junior 9 v 9 pitches to be provided based on growth projections 2019 – 2036. These 2 junior 9 v 9 pitches will assist in meeting the future shortfall of 16 junior 9 v 9 pitches. 2 Good quality pitches will provide for 6 matches back to back at peak time of play	2 new junior 9 v 9 good quality pitches based on growth projections – Thamesmead and Erith

Sport	Current Demand - Need	Future Provision - Need	Geographic Area – Future Need
		<p>The shortfall of 16 pitches at peak time of play can be met by taking numerous actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Improving the quality of existing pitches to provide more capacity and providing staggered kick off times. ■ Reconfiguring spare adult 11 v 11 pitches and or ■ Moving the predicted shortfall of 10 matches after provision of 2 good quality pitches from developer contributions onto 3G football turf pitches, which is Football Association policy. This would require football league agreements and the use of 2 full size 3G football turf pitches. 	
Mini Soccer 7 v 7	Mini Soccer 7 v 7 –Current demand is being met for mini 7 v 7 football.	<p>Population growth to 2036 and team generation rates predict the need for 1 mini soccer 7 v 7 pitches to be provided based on growth projections 2019 - 2036.</p> <p>In addition, the future use of 3G football turf pitches should be considered for mini soccer 7 v 7 match play.</p>	<p>1 new mini soccer 7 v 7 good quality pitches based on growth projections – Thamesmead and Erith</p>
Mini Soccer 5 v 5	Mini Soccer 5 v 5 – Current demand is being met for mini 5 v 5 match.	<p>Future demand can be met from existing 5 v 5 pitches.</p> <p>In addition, the future use of 3G football turf pitches should be considered for mini soccer 7 v 7 match play.</p>	None Identified
3G Football Turf Pitches	<p>Currently 4 full size floodlit 3G football turf pitches (FTPs) available for community use.</p> <p>3 full size FTPs are listed on the FA's 3G Pitch Register (which confirms the pitch has been performance tested and approved by a test centre) and deemed suitable for training and competitive matches.</p>	<p>Using the FA's 1:38 ratio and the current 288 FA Affiliated teams suggests that 8 (7.57 rounded up) full size floodlit 3G FTPs would be required to meet 100% of the current demand for training within Bexley (i.e. 288/38).</p> <p>Including the current and known 3G FTPs with planning permission, there will be 6 equivalent 3G FTPs across Bexley suggesting a future shortfall of 2 full size equivalent 3G FTPs.</p>	<p>2 full size 3G Football turf pitches – Thamesmead and Erith (Slade Green Area and Belvedere Area)</p>
Cricket	Broadly supply and demand is in balance. Demand is being met	Population growth to 2036 and team generation rates predict	2 smaller 8 wicket pitches and outfield with non-turf pitches

Sport	Current Demand - Need	Future Provision - Need	Geographic Area – Future Need
	<p>with 3 teams exported to neighbouring boroughs and current secured use of education sites.</p> <p>Although the supply and demand is in balance there is a shortage of supply in the north of the borough where there is a high black, Asian minority community that the ECB wish to encourage to participate in cricket.</p>	<p>the need for 1 large fine turf cricket pitch (16 wickets plus an NTP) provided and maintained to a 'good' standard based on growth projections 2019 and 2036.</p> <p>Alternatively, the need would be better addressed by the provision of 2 smaller pitches (8 wickets plus an NTP) to provide greater capacity and flexibility of match programming in the peak period.</p>	<p>based on growth projections – Thamesmead and Erith</p>
Rugby	<p>Current shortfall of training sessions on existing pitches.</p> <p>There is less provision in the north of the borough compared to the south of the borough.</p> <p>Pitches for match play are currently sufficient.</p>	<p>Population growth to 2036 and team generation rates predict the need for 2 full size rugby union pitches based on growth projections 2019 and 2036.</p> <p>To fit with the RFU's club-based model of provision, new provision should be linked to a programme of club development support with Erith RFC provided this club can demonstrate an ability to manage an increased membership base via appropriate governance, financial and developmental foundations.</p>	<p>2 full size rugby union pitches– Erith</p> <p>Need for floodlights across the geographic areas to assist with improving training mid-week.</p>
Hockey	<p>There is a current shortfall of 1 full size hockey AGP to meet hockey club match requirements at peak time of play.</p>	<p>Population growth to 2036 and team generation rates predict the need for 1 additional full hockey AGP based on growth projections 2019 and 2036.</p> <p>There needs to be consideration of where the current shortfall 1 AGP will need to be provided. 1 hockey club currently plays at King Henry school in the Erith geographic area and the other has a social base in the Crayford geographic area and plays on the borders of Crayford and Sidcup geographic areas.</p> <p>Any new based school provision could mean that surfaces of an AGP could be changed at any time to 3G football turf. To ensure security of tenure for hockey clubs new AGPs should be club based or provide security of tenure and ideally located to a thriving club base. In reality a school based AGP may be the only solution but will require a community use agreement to be in place.</p>	<p>There is a need for 2 AGPs in the future.</p> <p>Ideally provision of 1 club-based AGP in the Crayford geographic area and 1 AGP in the Erith geographic area.</p>
Tennis	<p>The Lawn Tennis Association does not have a model in place to evidence there is a sufficient quantity of tennis courts in</p>	<p>Future demand. The Lawn Tennis Association believe the number of courts in Bexley</p>	<p>The recreation ground and park sites that are priority sites for the LTA are:</p>

Sport	Current Demand - Need	Future Provision - Need	Geographic Area – Future Need
	Bexley borough to meet current demand. However, the Lawn Tennis Association believe the number of courts in Bexley will cover the potential demand.	currently will cover the potential future demand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Danson Park, Welling Geographic Area ■ Sidcup Place Ground, Sidcup Geographic Area Other tennis sites will be prioritised based upon identifying demand.
Netball	Currently facilities are poor at Town Park and previous PPS studies identified a need for a netball centre (with a minimum of 3 floodlit courts, changing facilities and on-site car parking).	A netball centre (with a minimum of 3 floodlit courts, changing facilities and on-site car parking) was identified as a facility need in the previous 2008 PPG17 assessment of outdoor sports facilities in the borough and has yet to be delivered. This updated review endorses the 2008 finding. Re-provision needs to be considered as part of master plan for Bexleyheath.	Demand identifies a need for a netball centre (with a minimum of 3 floodlit courts, changing facilities and on-site car parking). Future opportunities may arise in connection with the roll out of the Borough Growth Strategy, for example new secondary schools – Thamesmead and Erith geographical areas.
Bowls	There are sufficient bowls greens to meet current demand.	There are sufficient bowls greens to meet future demand. However, priority should be given to improving bowls facilities in the North of the Borough.	Improvements to bowls facilities in North Heath Recreation Ground and Erith Recreation Ground – Erith geographic area.
Golf	There are sufficient golf courses to meet current demand.	There are sufficient golf courses to meet future demand.	None Identified.

Summary of playing pitch assessment findings

7.27 Areas of formal sports provision in the borough make an important contribution to the GI network in the borough. Currently, many of these areas are of limited direct value to biodiversity in Bexley given their use for recreational activities and considering that they are mostly monoculture grassland. Direct benefits of this type of open space relate to health and wellbeing as well as alleviating flood risk by supporting the safe infiltration of surface water.

7.28 Overall it has been identified that outdoor sports facilities for various types of sports are at or close to capacity in the borough. In general no excess in provision has been identified when considering the current and future demand in Bexley.

7.29 The Sport Specific Action Plan (**Appendix J**) and Site Specific Action Plans (**Appendix K**) provide individual sport recommendations and individual site recommendations by geographic area.

7.30 The Sport Specific and Individual Site Action Plans are given timescales to deliver:

- **Short Term.** Delivered against or worked towards within three years (ahead of the first full review of the Playing Pitch Audit)
- **Medium Term.** Delivered within 6 years
- **Long Term.** No specific date – In many instances the action is an aspiration and is general support for clubs or other bodies to progress with and is not an action the Council or the Playing Pitch Steering Group have control over.

7.31 The strategic actions within Appendix F and G of the Playing Pitch Strategy have also been ranked as low, medium or high based on cost. These are based on sport England's estimated facility costs Quarter 2. The brackets in which these sit are:

- (L) -Low - less than £50k;
- (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k;
- (H) -High £250k and above.

7.32 In addition to using the planning system to lever in contributions through Section 106 or CIL, it is recognised that external partner funding will need to be sought to deliver much

of the action plan. Although seeking developer contributions in applicable situations and other local funding/community schemes could go some way towards meeting deficiencies and/or improving provision, other potential/match sources of funding should be investigated e.g. look to apply for grants and work with NGBs and Sport England to seek partnership funding several projects.

7.33 It is important that the Playing Pitch Audit Steering group keep this strategy alive. This will be achieved by:

- Monitoring the delivery of the recommendations and actions.
- Providing up to date annual supply and demand for pitch stock.
- Addressing changing trends and formats for the different pitch sports as they develop and monitoring participation of these changes and trends.

7.34 The general recommendations of the Playing Pitch Audit are:

1. London Borough Bexley will work in partnership with the members of the Playing Pitch Audit steering group:
 - Football Association Regional Investment and Facilities Manager London, Kent County Football Association and the London Football Association.
 - England and Wales Cricket Board Facilities and Investment Manager and Kent Cricket
 - Rugby Football Union Investment and Facilities Manager
 - England Hockey Relationship Manager for London / England Hockey Facilities Relationship Manager
 - Sport England
2. The on-going monitoring of the Playing Pitch Audit will be led by LB Bexley and will be linked to the Playing Pitch Audit Steering Group. The Playing Pitch Audit will be updated every 5 years. Ideally the Playing Pitch Audit could be reviewed on an annual basis from the date it is formally signed off by the Steering Group. The Steering Group including the NGBs will update the demand and supply information. This will help to maintain the momentum and commitment that would have been built up when developing the Playing Pitch Audit. Considering the time to develop the Playing Pitch Audit, this should also help to ensure that the original supply and demand information is no more than two years old without being reviewed.
3. The Playing Pitch Audit Assessment shows that all currently used playing field sites require protection and therefore cannot be deemed surplus to requirements

because of shortfalls now and in the future. Therefore, based on the outcomes of the Playing Pitch Audit, local planning policy should reflect this situation. The Local Plan should state that it protects all playing field sites from development or they should be replaced with better quality and accessible provision.

4. Lapsed and disused – playing field sites that formerly accommodated playing pitches but are no longer used for formal or informal sports use within the last five years (lapsed) or longer (disused). Lapsed, disused or underused and poor-quality sites should also be protected from development or replaced as there is a requirement for playing field land to accommodate more pitches to meet the identified shortfalls in the future.
5. Several playing pitch sites are being used in Bexley by sports clubs but these clubs do not have security of tenure or a short lease and there are also school sites where there is no community use agreement in place. Further works to ensure an appropriate Community Use Agreement (CUA) is in place (including access to changing provision where required). NGBs and London Sport (County Sports Partnership) can often help to negotiate and engage with schools, particularly academies where the local authority may not have direct influence. Sport England has also produced guidance, online resources and toolkits to help open and retain school sites for community use and can be found at: <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning>
6. As well as improving the quality of well-used, local authority sites, there are numerous sites which have poor quality (or no) ancillary facilities see Appendix F and G. Further explore opportunities where security of tenure could be granted to the clubs playing on these sites (minimum 25 years as recommended by Sport England and NGBs) so the clubs are able to apply for external funding to improve the ancillary facilities.
7. Where long term leases could be put into place for the continued use of a site. Each club should be required to meet service and/or strategic outcomes. However, an additional set of criteria should also be considered, which considers the quality of the club, aligned to its long-term development objectives and sustainability.
8. It is important for the Steering Group to work with sports clubs in order that they may be able to take greater levels of ownership and support the wider development and maintenance of facilities.
9. Planning consent should include appropriate conditions and/or be subject to CIL or a Section 106 Agreement. Where developer contributions are applicable a Section

106 Agreement must be completed specifying the amount and timing of sums to be paid.

10. Sport England's New Development Calculator for New Developments should be used to identify new need from a development and will guide on development, maintenance and sink fund costs. The action plan should guide developers and where possible and practical the Playing Pitch Audit Steering Group should be consulted on opportunities.
11. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan and the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule (if the Council commits to producing a CIL) should include locations and costed projects for investment in playing pitch facility provision and maintenance for sites.
12. Where new pitches are provided changing rooms should be located on site as a minimum for adult use including provision for women and girls or - as a minimum - toilet facilities for male, female and disabled should be provided.
13. The Sport Specific Action Plan (**Appendix J**) and Site Specific Action Plans (**Appendix K**) provide individual sport recommendations and individual site recommendations by geographic area.

8 Metropolitan Open Land Evidence Base



Chapter 8

Metropolitan Open Land Evidence Base

This chapter sets out the findings of the MOL designation review in Bexley.

8.1 This chapter sets out the findings of the MOL designation review, which includes an openness assessment of the current MOL designation, and additional land being considered for its potential as an addition to the MOL designation.

8.2 The additional land being considered for its potential as an addition to the MOL designation includes areas of land which best meet the MOL criteria, along with a number of land parcels the Council requested be considered.

8.3 The assessment has given a rating to each parcel of MOL in the borough in terms of the openness it displays. The rating ranges from 'Weak/No Openness' to 'Strong Openness'.

8.4 The assessment findings also include recommendations for minor MOL boundary realignments to better follow identifiable and recognisable boundaries on the ground, and the identification of potential new additions to MOL for consideration as part of the new Local Plan.

Openness Assessment of the current MOL designation

8.5 An assessment of MOL openness has been carried out to inform Council judgements on where it might be appropriate to release land from the MOL. The assessment identified a number of areas which currently display Weak/No Openness. The results of the assessment are illustrated in **Figure 8.1**.

8.6 In addition to the assessment of MOL openness, the boundaries along which the edges of the existing MOL designation have been drawn have been reviewed. Where appropriate, i.e. where the existing MOL boundary no longer follows physical, readily recognisable features that clearly mark the boundary of the built up area, minor boundary adjustments have been recommended. **Figure 8.1** also shows the minor amendments suggested to the MOL boundaries as well as areas of land which have been considered as potential additions to the MOL designation; these are discussed later in this chapter.

8.7 Table 8.1 sets out the justification for the assessment of openness in greater detail, as well as where minor amendments to MOL boundaries are proposed.

Table 8.1: Assessment of openness for current MOL designation

MOL reference	Description of MOL	Assessment of openness	Minor boundary changes proposed
MOL1a (Land at Lesnes Abbey Woods)	The land is located at the north western edge of the borough to the west of Belvedere and to the south east of Abbey Wood. It consists mostly of land within Lesnes Abbey Woods which is covered by thick tree cover in most places. The exceptions to this are to the north west towards the A2041; the open space which surrounds the Listed Building and Scheduled Monument at Lesney Abbey and extends towards a play area by Abbey Road; and an area of allotments towards the north east. This area of MOL extends towards the green corridor which provides connection between Abbey Road and Yarnton Way.	Tree cover within this area of MOL limits visual openness at most locations. However development within the MOL is limited to the ruins of Lesnes Abbey and Lesnes Lodge which is also at this location and supports educational activities and visits to the designated heritage assets. The lodge structure has been constructed as to limit any impact on the significance of the setting of the Listed Building and Scheduled Monument through its scale and design which includes a green roof. This in turn helps to reduce the impact this building has on the openness of the surrounding area of MOL. As such this area of MOL is considered to display Strong Openness .	None proposed.
MOL1b (Land at green corridor between Abbey Road and Yarnton Way)	The land is located to the north west of the borough to the east of Abbey Wood and to the north west of Belvedere. It comprises land within a green corridor allowing for travel by active transport between Abbey Road and Yarnton Way crossing the railway line by Alsike Road. The land contains scattered mature trees set amongst amenity grassland and a play area but is free from further development.	The MOL is free from significant development across its entirety. The land is however relatively narrow and is overlooked by substantial residential properties on both sides meaning that the perception of openness is impacted upon. Considering the lack of development within the MOL in combination with the impact of the surrounding residential properties along the length of this area of MOL it is considered that Relatively Strong Openness is displayed.	None proposed.
MOL1c (Land to north and south of Eastern Way including Southmere Park and Crossway Park)	The land is located to the north west of the borough to the east of Abbey Wood and north west of Belvedere. The land borders the River Thames to the north. Areas at the most north westerly corner of this area of MOL comprise the land immediately surrounding part of the canals to the north and immediate south of southerly section of Crossway. The area of MOL in close proximity to the south and east of Crossway contains open land at Crossway Park and Southmere Park to the west with the grounds at Sports Club Thamesmead and South Mere Lake forming the	Most of this part of the MOL comprises open land and playing fields at Crossway Park, part of Southmere Park and the playing pitches at Sports Club Thamesmead. The area of Southmere Park which is within this area of MOL contains South Mere Lake towards the south west. At the area to the south east of Eastern Way away from Southmere Park the land is characterized by open pastoral fields with a block of woodland present towards the south an exception to this. The land to the north east where the Crossness Nature Reserve is located is also flat and open with views towards commercial development along the Thames possible across this land. This land which accounts for most of the land within the boundaries of the within this section of MOL is considered to display Strong Openness . In the area of MOL to the north west of South Mere Lake an element of existing development is present at the Lakeside Event Centre. The building is set amongst areas of hardstanding and mature vegetation which limit	None proposed.

MOL reference	Description of MOL	Assessment of openness	Minor boundary changes proposed
	<p>remainder of the land to the west. Areas of the Crossness Sewage Treatment Works fall within the boundaries of the MOL towards the north on the approach to the river. To the south of the treatment works beyond Eastern Way much of the area comprises flat open pastoral fields in close proximity to the Thames Innovation Centre the boundaries of which have been excluded from the MOL designation. The eastern edge of the MOL comprises the land by Crossness Nature Reserve.</p>	<p>the impact the development has on the openness of the surrounding area to an extent. Given the scale of the existing development currently at this area of MOL it is considered to display Relatively Weak Openness.</p> <p>The area at the most north westerly boundary of the MOL comprises the land which surrounds the canals and ditches to the north and immediate south of the southerly section of Crossway. This includes a play area at Moat Gardens by Curlew Close. This entire area of MOL is free from development but given the nature of the land at the edges of the canal it is quite narrow in most places. The mature vegetation at the canal edges limits the impact which surrounding development would otherwise have in terms of the perceived openness at these locations. It is therefore considered that this area of MOL displays Relatively Strong Openness.</p> <p>Harris Garrard Academy is present within the area at the southern boundary of this area of MOL. The academy buildings are set within hardstandings and areas of open space with sports uses as well as a significant area containing solar panels to the south of an extensive block of mature trees. The school buildings are separated from the residential development to the south at the existing urban edge of Belvedere by the Yarnton Way dual carriageway. Considering the significant impact of the development on openness at this location in relation to its contained setting amongst areas of open space this area of MOL is considered to display Relatively Weak Openness within the immediate vicinity of the school buildings.</p> <p>Considered separately from these school buildings the area of MOL which sits immediately between them comprises a significant portion of hardstanding with solar panels to the north. The area is relatively contained by the block of woodland to the north and the dual carriageway at Yarnton Way to the south. Given that solar panel development is often of a temporary nature and with consideration for the influence the extensive elements of development have immediately to the east and west of this area this portion of MOL is recorded as having Relatively Strong Openness.</p> <p>The area of MOL immediately to the west of the academy grounds fronting on to Yarnton Way to the south is bounded to the west by Katherines Road and partially by a block of woodland to the north. The MOL is relatively narrow particularly towards the south where existing residential and education developments are closest to the west and east respectively. While the tall residential buildings to the south are viewable from within the MOL it is separated from these structures by the dual carriageway at Yarnton Way. This area is entirely free from development and the close proximity of the surrounding development and that which is viewable to the south of the land are the elements which impact upon its openness. Overall it is considered that this area of MOL displays Relatively Strong Openness.</p> <p>The area of MOL immediately to the north of the existing residential development at St Katherines Road and to the south of Belvedere Road is entirely free from development. The MOL takes in the western part of Southmere Park. It is visually open towards its central portion however there are bands of mature trees present in places particularly towards the south and north which limit some of the views across it. The topography of the land also limits the perception of visual openness at the MOL in places. Given that the development only borders the site immediately to the south with the open land in Southmere Park and South</p>	

MOL reference	Description of MOL	Assessment of openness	Minor boundary changes proposed
		<p>Mere Lake bordering it to the east and west respectively it is considered that this MOL displays Strong Openness.</p> <p>The boundaries of the MOL towards the north at the edge of the River Thames take in parts of the Crossness Sewage Treatment Works. Extensive areas of development are now present as far south as Eastern Way, as far west as Belvedere Road and as far east as the boundary of the Crossness Nature Reserve. The areas of land which contain elements of development which breach the boundaries at this location of MOL display Weak/No Openness.</p> <p>The area of MOL to the south west of South Mere Lake to the north east of the junction of Tavy Bridge and Yarnton Way contains Willow Bank Primary School and its associated playing fields as well as a significant amount of residential development. This residential development relates strongly to the taller properties immediately to the south west and has a significant impact on the openness of the surrounding MOL. While Willow Bank Primary School is set amongst its playing fields the developed element of the grounds still has a significant impact on the openness of the surrounding MOL. As such this area of MOL is considered to display Weak/No Openness.</p>	
<p>MOL2 (Land at Belmont Primary School)</p>	<p>The land is located towards the central portion of the borough towards the south western of Erith. The land is towards the northern edge of the grounds of Belmont Primary School. This area of MOL is relatively small in size and is covered almost entirely by mature trees and vegetation.</p>	<p>The existing mature tree cover and vegetation at this site means that there are only very limited views into and out of this area of MOL. As such visual openness at this location is relatively limited. While this area of MOL is relatively narrow across its entirety it is set amongst areas of surrounding open space and hardstanding used by the school to the south, west and east. Small areas of mature vegetation act to limit the impact the relatively narrow nature of this area of land might otherwise have on the perception of spatial openness at this location. The MOL is also entirely free from development meaning that Relatively Strong Openness is recorded.</p>	<p>None proposed.</p>
<p>MOL3 (Land at East Wickham Open Space)</p>	<p>The land is located at the western boundary of the borough towards the north western edge of Welling. It mostly comprises land within East Wickham Open Space as well as some small fields outside of this area of open space and the grounds of East Wickham Infant and Nursery School and East Wickham Primary Academy to the south. East Wickham Open Space contains land which undulates in places and there are bands of mature trees present across its central portion as well towards its north eastern corner. Significant portions of this area of MOL accommodate allotments and there is also a small children's play area towards the centre.</p>	<p>The majority of this area of MOL is entirely free from development. While the mature tree cover and topography of the land acts to limit visual openness in places there are extensive views across this area of land from east to west particularly from the location of the play area towards the centre. As such much of this area of MOL displays Strong Openness.</p> <p>Towards the south however at the grounds of East Wickham Infant and Nursery School and East Wickham Primary Academy the extent of these developments which is set amongst hard standings and a playing pitch both display Weak/No Openness.</p> <p>The area of MOL which is set between these school buildings to the north the junction of Wickham Street, Burnell Avenue and Central Avenue comprises a playing pitch and area of amenity grassland. While this area is entirely free from development it is relatively narrow with school buildings in close proximity on either side. As such the perception of openness has been compromised to a limited extent and it is considered that this area of MOL displays Relatively Strong Openness.</p>	<p>None proposed.</p>

MOL reference	Description of MOL	Assessment of openness	Minor boundary changes proposed
<p>MOL4 (Land to the north of Bellegrove Road and to the west of Wickham Street)</p>	<p>The land is located towards the west of the borough at the western edge of the existing urban edge of Welling. This area of MOL comprises land within Hillview Cemetery towards the east with an open pastoral field present directly to the west of this. The cemetery which sits at a slightly elevated position above the land to the west, comprises areas of managed landscaping and a small maintenance building set amongst the mature vegetation towards Wickham Street. Mature vegetation bounds the MOL at its furthestmost western edge as well as covering much of the northern portion of this land. A number of allotments are located within a small portion of this area of MOL to the north by Keats Road. Built development at this land comprises an area of recent residential development at Hill View Drive and Bond Close directly to the south of the cemetery land and the petrol station and public house towards the south west at Bellgrove Road.</p>	<p>Mature tree cover within this area of MOL acts to limit the visual openness at some locations. This is particularly the case between the land at Hillview Cemetery and the open pastoral field to the west as well as at the land to the south of Keats Road and the land to the north of the petrol station and public house on Bellegrove Road. The land covered by this mature vegetation including the area of allotments as well as land at the cemetery and the open field to the west are almost entirely free from development. The exception to this is the small maintenance building within the cemetery. The surrounding mature vegetation at this location however means that the impact of the building on openness of this area is limited to the immediate vicinity. As such this area of MOL is rated to have Strong Openness.</p> <p>The area immediately to the south of Hillview Cemetery at Hill View Drive and Bond Close has now been almost entirely developed. Open spaces within this area are limited mostly to private residential gardens. As such the presence of this relatively recent residential development means that this area of MOL displays Weak/No Openness.</p> <p>The area of MOL towards the southernmost edge of this area of MOL contains a petrol station and public house by Bellegrove Road. While the area to the north of this land is covered by mature trees the presence of this built development acts to impact on the openness on this portion of the MOL particularly when viewed from Bellegrove Road. This area of land immediately to the north of Bellegrove Road is recorded as displaying Weak/No Openness.</p>	<p>None proposed.</p>
<p>MOL5 (Land at Danson Park)</p>	<p>The land is located to the west of the borough between the western edge of Bexleyheath and the south eastern edge of Welling. It comprises land which is predominantly open within Danson House Park as well as the grounds of Bexley Grammar School to the west. The park contains a sizeable boating lake towards the south east. It is also crossed by a number of small roads the most notable passing from east to west between Danson Road and Danson Lane. This route provides access to the Listed Buildings Danson Park Mansion (Grade I) and Danson Park Stables (Grade II*) towards the central portion of the park. There is also a park maintenance building at this location which has an extensive footprint but is only one floor in height. Other notable buildings within the MOL are the maintenance buildings towards the west, St John's Church towards the</p>	<p>The area of MOL to the north of the access road which links the Danson Road to Danson Lane contains some more notable forms of development at Danson Stables and a relatively large maintenance building to the centre which are set amongst at a sizeable hardstanding, as well as the small building associated with Danson Park Bowling Green towards the north east. In the area further to the north of this road however the MOL is open and free from significant development apart from the buildings used by Bexleyheath and Belvedere Hockey Club which are quite close to Park View Road. There are playing pitches and tennis courts as well as the low-lying stands at the football grounds towards the north west however these uses are considered appropriate within MOL. Much of this area particularly to the north and west is set amongst extensive tree cover meaning the impact that the stands and clubhouse building has on the openness of the MOL is limited to the immediate vicinity. Furthermore away from these areas the land is free from development to such an extent as to be considered to display Strong Openness.</p> <p>Development within the area of MOL to the south of the access road is limited to Danson House to the immediate south of this route in the central portion of the land and Danson Park Water Sports Centre to the south east by Danson Road in close proximity to the boating lake. Blocks of woodland are present at this land by the western entrance of the park and towards the south west. There are further blocks of woodland present between the eastern entrance of the park and the boating lake to the south east and also in the south eastern corner of the park. While the tree cover acts to limit the visual openness of this land in some places, there are</p>	<p>None proposed.</p>

MOL reference	Description of MOL	Assessment of openness	Minor boundary changes proposed
	<p>west and Bexley Grammar School towards the south west which is set amongst its associated grounds. The other buildings at this area of MOL are those associated with sports uses including the Danson Park Water Sports Centre to the south east, a building associated with the Danson Park Bowling Green to the east and buildings associated with the Bexleyheath and Belvedere Hockey Club to the north. Formal playing pitches and tennis courts are mostly confined to the north towards the hockey club grounds and the grounds of Erith and Belvedere Football Club. Mature vegetation covers much of the MOL within the park particularly at its edges with more significant blocks of woodland to the west, at the eastern entrance to the park and to the south of the boating lake. More linear formal planting is present along some of the routes across the park.</p>	<p>still extensive open views particularly from north to south across the open land towards the boating lake which slopes gently downhill in this direction. This area of MOL displays Strong Openness.</p> <p>At the MOL by the western entrance to the park on either side of the park's main access road St John's Church and the park maintenance buildings impact on the perception of openness. While this development is set amongst mature tree cover to the west in particular, the buildings impact upon the perception of openness of the MOL from Danson Lane at the park's entrance. This area of MOL displays Relatively Weak Openness.</p> <p>At the eastern entrance of the park by junction of Bean Road and Danson Road (A221) a small residential property is present in close proximity to the A-road. This property is set amongst mature vegetation and blocks of woodland screen it from much of the rest of the park to the south and west. The property does however act to impact on the openness of the park particularly when viewed from its eastern entrance. It is therefore considered that this area of MOL displays Relatively Weak Openness.</p> <p>To the south east towards Lakeside Close and Danson Road another relatively small residential property is present within the boundaries of the MOL. This property is set amongst open land and mature vegetation to the south of the boat lake. It relates strongly to the residential properties on the other side of the Danson Road however and as such acts to limit the sense of openness at this area of the land. This area of MOL displays Relatively Weak Openness.</p> <p>Towards the south west Bexley Grammar School comprises a number of sizeable buildings set amongst hardstandings and a number of sports fields. The sports uses at this location maintain a limited sense of openness but the school buildings are not set within mature vegetation which might otherwise act to limit impact on the perception of openness. The school grounds form a logical extension to the current built edge to the south and west. This area of MOL displays Weak/No Openness.</p>	
<p>MOL6 (Land at Woodside Road including Martens Grove Park)</p>	<p>The land is located towards the east of the borough at the southern edge of Barnehurst and at the north eastern edge of Bexleyheath. Woodside Road runs through the eastern portion of this land and to the west of this much of the land falls within Martens Grove Park. Much of the land within the park falls within Martens Grove SINC and the woodland within the eastern portion of the park has been designated as ancient woodland. Much of the park beyond this eastern portion is heavily wooded and it also contains a children's play area and tennis courts. Towards the north east of the park the school grounds of Endeavour Academy Bexley and Mayplace Primary School are set along the western side of Woodside Road. On the</p>	<p>The land to the west of Woodside Road is not particularly visually open given the nature and extent of the tree coverage in this vicinity. This area is entirely free from development however and therefore is considered to have Strong Openness in spatial terms.</p> <p>Towards the north east where the school grounds are located the school buildings have comprised the openness of the land to a greater extent. While some mature vegetation is present towards the edges of the school grounds and there are areas of open space which allow for sports uses present it is considered that this portion of the land has Relatively Weak Openness.</p> <p>The land to the east of Woodside Road contains various playing pitches and associated buildings and stands. The density of the development is greater in the southern half of the area, where the width of the MOL is also narrowest. Although small scale structures to support outdoor open space uses are appropriate developments in MOL, the concentration of this development in combination with the relatively narrow width of the MOL does affect the openness of the MOL within the southern half of this area and is therefore rated to be of Moderate Openness. To the north of this area where development is limited to low-lying stands and a club house</p>	<p>The boundary of the MOL at the northern portion of Martens Grove Park should be extended to include all of the land within the park. Land to the immediate south west of Groveland Park Care Home is currently excluded.</p>

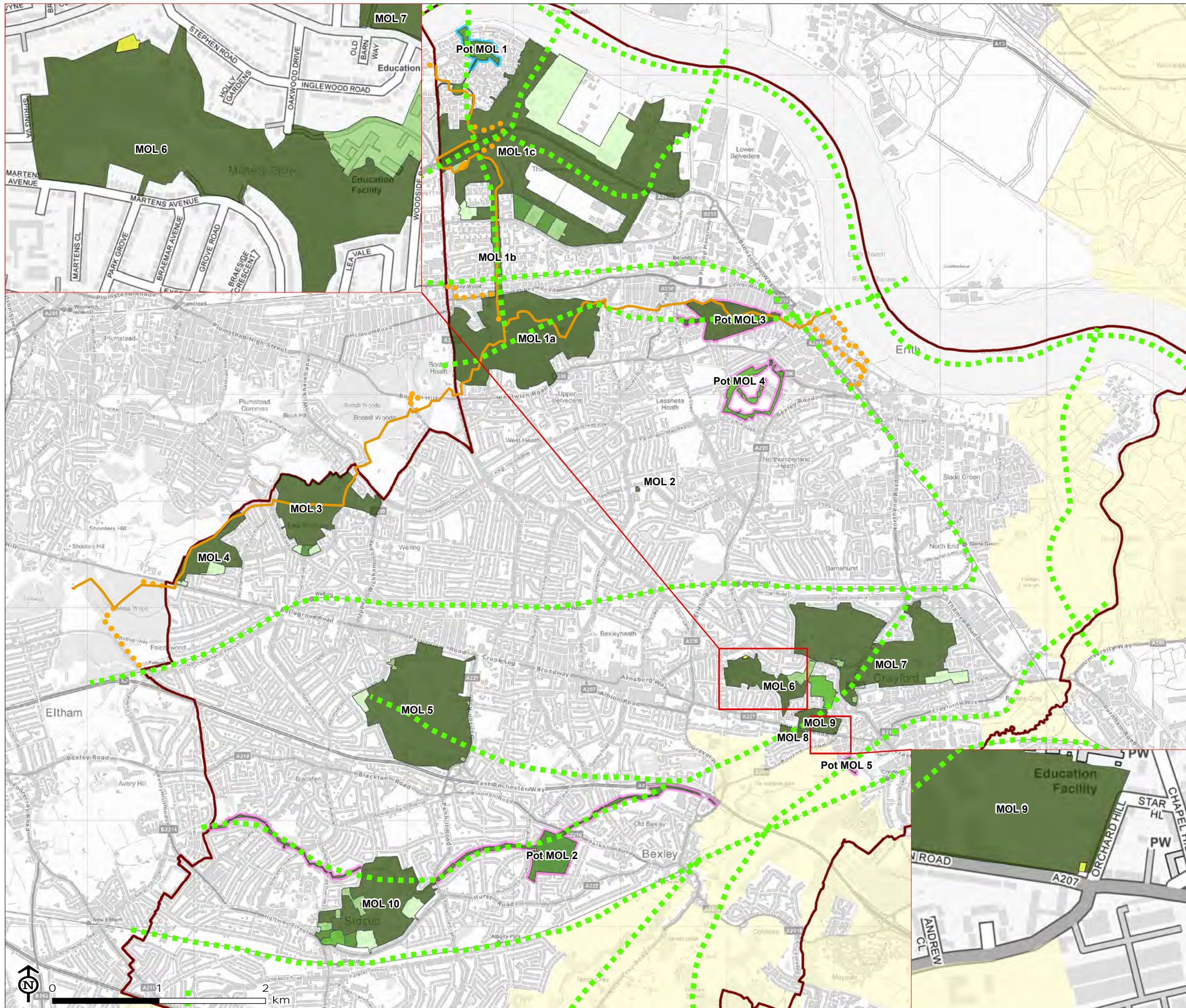
MOL reference	Description of MOL	Assessment of openness	Minor boundary changes proposed
	<p>eastern side of this road a number of playing pitches including bowling greens and tennis courts make up the MOL. Many of the playing pitches are flood lit and there are moderately sized stands and club house buildings present.</p>	<p>building set amongst amenity green space and open land used as a football pitch the land is considered to display Strong Openness.</p>	
<p>MOL7 (Land at A2000)</p>	<p>The land is located towards the eastern edge of the borough to the north west of Crayford and to the east of Barnehurst. The A2000 runs through the central portion of the land in a south westerly direction effectively dividing it in two. Much of the land on either side of this road within the MOL falls within Perry Street Farm SINC or Barnehurst Golf Course SINC. To the west much of the land is in use as sports facilities with Barnehurst Golf Course, a number of playing pitches and bowling greens towards this location. This portion of the land also contains an area of allotments towards the south west, with an area of formal planting and churchyard at St Paulinus Church to the south along the A2000. The eastern portion of this land is in use as playing pitches, a cricket field and the schools grounds at Haberdashers' Aske's Crayford Academy towards the south. Towards the north however where the land is of a more variable topography it is undeveloped around a small farmstead. Towards the eastern edge this land falls within Stoneham Park which is publicly accessible from Mayplace Avenue.</p>	<p>The land to the west of the A2000 is less visually open than the land to the east of this road. Vegetation within and at the edges of the golf course and the playing pitches to the west of the A2000 and to the north of the Mayplace Road East provides visual enclosure but does not impact on spatial openness at this location. Most of this land is considered to display Strong Openness given that buildings are limited to buildings which support the use of the sports facilities present.</p> <p>The openness of the land to the south been comprised to a degree by the presence of the church building. This building is however set amongst the open setting of the churchyard and the mature tree cover to the north acts to limit its impact to the immediate vicinity. The land in the immediate surroundings of the church displays Relatively Weak Openness.</p> <p>Further exception to the strong openness demonstrated within this area of land is by the junction of Mayplace Road East and Manor Road where the Bexley Voluntary Service Council building and a number of smaller properties are present. The presence of these buildings means that development has breached the otherwise strong boundary at Mayplace Road East. The small area defined by the boundaries of these properties displays Relatively Weak Openness given that it relates strongly to the residential properties to the south of Mayplace Road East, contains a significant element of development including hardstandings but is set amongst areas of mature vegetation.</p> <p>To the east of the A2000 the land is much more visually open comprising mostly pastoral fields which are free from significant tree cover. The land slopes downhill from west to east where the boundary of Stoneham Park is formed. The extent of the openness at this land is demonstrated by views from the A2000 to the north east as far as Littlebrook Power Station and the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge. The main buildings within this portion of the land are confined to the isolated properties at the small farmstead and the club house at the playing pitches to the east of the A2000. As such this land displays Strong Openness.</p> <p>The area of land immediately surrounding Haberdashers' Aske's Crayford Academy to the south of No Through Road has been developed to allow for buildings to support educational uses thereby compromising its openness. Sports uses at this location maintain a limited sense of openness although the school grounds form a logical extension to the current built edge to the south and east. Overall it is considered that the westernmost area at the school grounds display Weak/No Openness.</p>	<p>None proposed.</p>

MOL reference	Description of MOL	Assessment of openness	Minor boundary changes proposed
MOL8 (Land at Bigs Hill Wood)	The land is located towards the east of the borough at the eastern edge of Bexleyheath and towards the western edge of Crayford. It comprises land at Bigs Hill Wood and its boundaries follow the boundaries of Hall Place (North) & Shenstone Park SINC. The land slopes uphill from east to west and from north to south away from London Road. Mature tree cover and vegetation is present along the northern boundary by London Road and also along the southern boundary which is formed at the residential property lines. Further smaller blocks of mature trees are scattered throughout the rest of this land.	While the existing mature tree cover and areas of vegetation act to limit views into and out of this MOL there is visual openness at much of the land within the MOL boundaries. Furthermore the land is entirely free from development. As such this area of MOL is considered to have Strong Openness .	None proposed.
MOL9 (Land at Shenstone Park)	The land is located towards the east of the borough at the north western edge of Crayford and in close proximity to the eastern edge of Bexleyheath. It mostly comprises land within Shenstone Park much of which is located within Hall Place (North) & Shenstone Park SINC. A small children's play area is located within the park towards the north east by the boundary of Shenstone School which lies mostly outside of the boundaries of this area of MOL. The most southerly portion of the school grounds however fall within this area of MOL but this area remains mostly undeveloped containing a small playing pitch set behind metal fencing. Shenstone park is accessible from the south at London Road and the land slopes uphill from the south towards the north west from here. The park contains numerous blocks of mature trees and vegetation.	The presence of the mature tree cover and the existing topography act to limit visual openness in places of the park. The land is however almost entirely free from development which is limited to small temporary storage structures associated with the school towards the north east. As such this area of MOL is considered to have Strong Openness in spatial terms.	The boundary of this area of MOL to the south west at the junction of London Road and Orchard Hill omits a section of Shenstone Park. The boundary should be redrawn to reflect the boundaries of the park but omit the area of hardstand beyond the entrance of the park.
MOL10 (Land at Lamorbey Park and Sidcup Golf Course)	The land is located within the south western part of the borough at the southern edge of Blackfen and the northern edge of Sidcup. The MOL is comprised mostly of land within Lamorbey Park. Towards the north east the land forms Sidcup Golf	The majority of the land falls within Lamorbey Park and Sidcup Golf Club both of which are free from significant development. The bands of mature tree within the golf course, along parts of the River Shuttle, surrounding the pond and within Lamorbey Park along the footpaths and at its southern edge limit the visual openness at locations of the park. As these parts of the MOL are free from development however it is considered that they display Strong Openness .	None proposed.

MOL reference	Description of MOL	Assessment of openness	Minor boundary changes proposed
	<p>Club through which the River Shuttle flows. There is also a pond within the boundaries of the park which sits towards the central portion dividing the northern land from the south. Bands of tree cover are present most notably within the golf course to the north west and along the edges of the pond towards the centre of the park. Around this central portion the park acts as the setting for a number of Grade II Listed Buildings. The MOL also includes a number of buildings which support education uses and the sport uses. Chislehurst and Sidcup Grammar School is located towards the south, Hurstmere School is located towards the south east, Chatsworth Infant School and Rose Bruford College are located towards the north west and Holy Trinity Lamorbey Church of England Primary School is located towards the south west. The south west of the MOL also contains Sidcup Leisure Centre, Holy Trinity Church and a handful of residential properties. Sidcup Youth Centre is located to the north of these buildings at the edge of Lamorbey Park.</p>	<p>The area of MOL to north west contains Chatsworth Infant School and Rose Bruford College as well as the Listed Buildings immediately to the south of these education facilities. This area is set amongst mature vegetation and open land which surrounds much of the hardstanding areas which allow for car parking by these buildings. The significant level of development at this part of the MOL means that this area displays Relatively Weak Openness.</p> <p>To the south west of Chatsworth Infant School and immediately to the south of Burnt Oak Lane, Sidcup Youth Centre is set at the boundary of Lamorbey Park. The building has a relatively large footprint but sits at one to two floors across its entirety. It is furthermore set amongst areas of hardstanding to the north and adjoining open spaces which are free from development with a limited number of mature trees towards the buildings northern, southern and eastern frontages. This area of MOL is considered to display Relatively Weak Openness.</p> <p>To the south west of this area of MOL there is also a significant element of development present. This part of the MOL contains buildings to the south of a significant band of tree cover at the southern edge of Lamorbey Park. The buildings include Sidcup Leisure Centre, Holy Trinity Church and a handful of residential properties towards the junction of Hurst Road and Station Road. While visual openness is limited by the tree cover particularly towards the south western corner there are areas of open space surrounding the church building and at the gardens of the residential properties. While an extensive area of hardstanding is present surrounding the leisure centre building it is free from extensive development which would further act to limit the perception of openness at this location. As such it is considered that Moderate Openness is displayed within this area of MOL.</p> <p>The sizeable school buildings at Holy Trinity Lamorbey Church of England Primary School to the west of this area of MOL is set amongst areas of playing pitches and a hardstanding which is used for car parking. There are a number of mature trees present at this location most notably towards the south of the school buildings however they are relatively sparse at most locations. The area within the immediate vicinity of the school buildings is considered to display Relatively Weak Openness.</p> <p>The portion of MOL at Chislehurst and Sidcup Grammar School contains an extensive amount of development both in terms of the number of buildings present and the scale of the buildings at this land. While an area of hardstanding and number of artificial play pitches are present at the northern area of the school grounds the extensive nature of the development and close proximity of these buildings means that this the entirety of this portion of MOL is considered to display Weak/No Openness.</p> <p>Set between these portions of development are areas of open space which are free from development. The areas fall within the grounds of Lamorbey Park or serve as playing pitches for the school buildings in the area. The area to the immediate north of Holy Trinity Lamorbey Church of England Primary School and to the west of Sidcup Youth Centre contains a number of mature trees particularly along its northern boundary. The existing buildings to the south west and north east outside of this portion of land are not within close enough proximity to each other and are not of a significant scale as to impact upon the perception of openness within this portion of MOL. As such it is considered that this portion of MOL displays Strong Openness. The area of</p>	

MOL reference	Description of MOL	Assessment of openness	Minor boundary changes proposed
		<p>MOL between Holy Trinity Lamorbey Church of England Primary School and the Holy Trinity Church and Sidcup Leisure Centre is also entirely free from development. Visual openness is limited as a result of the extensive mature tree cover at this land. This mature vegetation also acts to limit the influence of the extensive elements of the development to the north and south. Given the close proximity of the surrounding development and considering that this land is relatively narrow along much of its length it is considered that this portion of MOL displays Relatively Strong Openness. The area of MOL set between the Sidcup Leisure Centre and Chislehurst and Sidcup Grammar School comprises playing pitches which serve the school. This area of MOL is contained by a block of woodland to the north and is entirely visually open. This considered the extensive elements of development at the school buildings to the east and the leisure centre to the west are prominent on either side of this area of land. As such it is considered that the MOL displays Relatively Strong Openness.</p> <p>The MOL to the south east contains the sizeable buildings of Hurstmere School. It is surrounded by smaller support buildings and hardstanding which allows for car parking. The access road to the school from Hurst Road separates much of the school's sports fields from its main buildings. As such it relates strongly to the residential properties to the south east and is considered to display Weak/No Openness.</p>	

Figure 8.1: Metropolitan Open Land Review



- Bexley
- Green belt
- Strategic green wildlife corridor
- Green chain walk
- Alternative route
- Green chain walk
- Openness assessment of current and potential MOL
- Strong openness
- Relatively strong openness
- Moderate openness
- Relatively weak openness
- Weak/ no openness
- Additional land considered as potential MOL
- Land best meeting MOL criteria
- Pot MOL 1: Land at Thamesmead Ecology Study Area*
- Land which does not meet MOL criteria
- Pot MOL 2: Land at the River Shuttle taking in Bexley Park Wood*
- Pot MOL 3: Land at Frank's Park*
- Pot MOL 4: Land at Erith Quarry*
- Pot MOL 5: Land to west of Crayford Rough*
- Potential minor boundary adjustments
- MOL 6: Land at Woodside Road including Martens Grove Park*
- MOL 9: Land at Shenstone Park*

Map Scale @A3: 1:35,000



Consideration of potential new MOL

8.8 An assessment of all open land within the London Borough of Bexley has been carried out in order to establish whether there are any significant areas of open land which are currently not designated as MOL, but meet the London Plan criteria¹¹⁸ for designation of new MOL. The vast majority of the open land within the borough which is not currently designated as MOL has been discounted for further consideration either due to its size or location in the open countryside, often forming part of the metropolitan Green Belt.

8.9 The findings of the open space review have been consulted to establish if any pockets of open land not currently designated as MOL are large enough to be considered to be, as a minimum, of metropolitan significance. However, all open spaces at this level of the open space hierarchy are already designated as MOL or metropolitan Green Belt.

8.10 In addition, in line with the criteria for designating MOL set out in Policy 7.17 in the London Plan, existing and potential new green chains within and adjacent to the borough have been reviewed – such as the South East Green Chain – and areas containing environmental features or landscapes of importance have been reviewed.

8.11 Three initial open spaces, Land at Thamesmead Ecology Study Area (PotMOL1), Land at the River Shuttle taking in Bexley Park Wood (PotMOL2) and Land at Frank's Park (PotMOL3), have been identified for more detailed assessment against the London Plan MOL criteria. Areas which exist solely as linear open spaces (i.e. those which do not contain land which is identified as a park or natural and semi-natural urban green space) have been discounted given the limited purpose they would serve in terms of their importance for the whole of, or significant parts of London. The areas considered fell within a strategic green corridor or green chain. Through their proximity to current areas of MOL or their presence within strategic green corridor or green chain, these areas would link to the existing MOL designation.

8.12 The council requested that two further areas of land were considered for designation as MOL. These were:

- Erith Quarry (PotMOL4): the area comprising land which is to be maintained as ecological areas of planting, ecological corridors and a village green at the new development at Erith Quarry.
- Land to the east of Crayford Rough (PotMOL5): the area comprising land immediately to the east of Crayford Rough SINC and immediately to the south of River Cray SINC.

8.13 The location of each area of land considered is shown in **Figure 8.1**. **Table 8.2** presents the detailed reasoning behind why each area has been identified for further assessment and recommends whether the areas should be given further consideration for designation as MOL by the Council.

¹¹⁸ London Plan (2016) Policy 7.17

Table 8.2: Consideration of new land for potential designation as MOL

MOL reference	Description of land considered for designation as MOL	Consideration against the London Plan MOL criteria and assessment of openness	Potential for further consideration of land as part of MOL?
<p>PotMOL1 (Land at Thamesmead Ecology Study Area)</p>	<p>The land is located towards the northwestern edge of the borough to the north of Abbey Wood and east of Thamesmead. This portion of land borders the River Thames to the north. It takes in the canals and ditches immediately to the north of those canal areas which are currently contained within the MOL area MOL1c. The area comprises land at the canal edges to the north of the most northerly section of Crossway. Much of the land is within the Thamesmead Ecology Study Area and the Crossway Lake Nature Reserve and Thameside Walk Scrub SINC. A small portion of the land falls within Crossway Park and Tump 52 SINC. The northern portion of the land towards the edge of the River Thames contains an area of hardstanding towards the Thames Path and also a play area.</p>	<p>There is a strong relationship between this area of land and the area of the canals to the south of the northerly section of Crossway which is currently within the MOL designation. It effectively forms an extension to the green infrastructure network at this location. Both the MOL to the south and the land within the Thamesmead Ecology Study Area fall within The Thamesmead Link strategic green corridor. Furthermore the presence of the Crossway Lake Nature Reserve and Thameside Walk Scrub SINC and Crossway Park and Tump 52 SINC at this land means that the area contains an important feature of biodiversity. The Crossway Lake Nature Reserve and Thameside Walk Scrub SINC takes up a large portion of this land and has Grade I status. Land within the SINC has been designation due to its importance in the context of the wider borough. The Crossway Park and Tump 52 is recognized to only have local importance in terms of biodiversity for residents and other people in the nearby area.</p> <p>This area of land is free of significant development. The presence of mature tree cover at the edges of the stretches of canal limits visual openness and views up the canal length in many places but also acts to limit the impact that the surrounding residential development would otherwise have on the overall perception of openness at these locations. In relation to this perception of openness particular consideration is given to the narrowness of the distance between existing residential development outside of its boundaries in many places. The area of this land which currently lies immediately to the west of Woburn Close and to the east of Dolphin Close displays the strongest level of openness in comparison to the rest of the land at the edges of the canal given that the distance between the residential developments outside of the edges of this area is greater at this location. The land is considered to display a similar level of openness to the area of MOL at the canals to the immediate south of the northerly section of Crossway. As</p>	<p>There is a strong relationship between this area of land and the area of the canals to the south of the northerly section of Crossway which is currently within the MOL designation with both areas forming part of the same strategic green corridor. The land contains biodiversity features of value at a borough level. also displays a level of openness which is similar to that displayed within the MOL directly to the south. This area of land performs relatively strongly against the MOL designation criteria in the London Plan.</p> <p>It is suggested that this area of land is considered further for designation as MOL.</p>

MOL reference	Description of land considered for designation as MOL	Consideration against the London Plan MOL criteria and assessment of openness	Potential for further consideration of land as part of MOL?
		such it is considered that this area of land displays Relatively Strong Openness .	
PotMOL2 (Land at the River Shuttle taking in Bexley Park Wood)	The land takes in the SINC located along the banks of the River Shuttle which runs from east to west from the Green Belt edge by East Rochester Way to western boundary of the borough towards Avery Hill. The land connects to existing MOL at Lamborbey Park and Sidcup Golf Course (MOL10). The land also takes in the SINC at Bexley Park Wood.	<p>The land does not link to the South East Green Chain but has been identified as part of a strategic green corridor (The River Shuttle Link) in the borough. It would form an extension to the existing MOL designation which is currently at Lamborbey Park/Sidcup Golf Course. All of the land considered furthermore takes in either that within the River Shuttle SINC or Bexley Park Wood SINC. Both of these designations have SINC Grade I status and therefore have importance in the context of the wider borough. Much of the land considered however is not identified as falling within a park or open space. Sections of the SINC along the River Shuttle SINC fall within open spaces or parks however these are of a size to be classified as local or small. Furthermore the land at Bexley Park Wood SINC falls within a local open space. It is therefore considered that the land is not of a size as to be clearly distinguishable from the surrounding built up area or to serve the whole or significant parts of London. The land at the River Shuttle is also disjointed at places where it is crossed by larger roads most notably to the east by the junction of East Rochester Road and the A223.</p> <p>The land within the River Shuttle Link is relatively narrow and is bordered by existing residential properties on either side for much of its length. In places mature vegetation is in place at the boundary to limit the impact of the surrounding development on the perception of openness at this land. The land is also crossed by a number of roads along its entirety. Bexley Park Wood is entirely free from development and mature trees cover much of this land. With particular consideration for the close proximity of the residential development along much of the length of the River Shuttle considering that it is relatively narrow it is considered that this land displays Relatively Strong Openness.</p>	<p>While this area of land forms part of a strategic green corridor and contains biodiversity features of value at a borough level it does not perform strongly against any of the other MOL designation criteria in the London Plan. The relatively long and linear form of the land means that it is surrounded by residential development in most places and crossed by a number of roads as such resulting in a disjointed area of open space. Furthermore much of the land is not located within identified open spaces and where the land takes this form the open spaces in question are of such a size as to be identified as small or local as set out through the open space hierarchy.</p> <p>It is not recommended that this area of land is considered further for designation as a new area of MOL.</p>
PotMOL3	The land is located towards the northern edge of the borough at the north west of Erith. It comprises land at Frank's Park	The land is connected to the South East Green Chain but does not link to a current portion of MOL. This land however	While this area of land forms part of a Green Chain and contains biodiversity features of value at a borough level it

MOL reference	Description of land considered for designation as MOL	Consideration against the London Plan MOL criteria and assessment of openness	Potential for further consideration of land as part of MOL?
(Land at Frank's Park)	which is mostly wooded. To the northern edge of the park by Parkside Road a small play area and basketball court are present.	<p>takes in Franks Park, Belvedere SINC. The SINC has Grade I status and therefore has importance in the context of the wider borough. The park is of a size as to be categorised as a local urban green space and therefore is not considered to be of a size to be clearly distinguishable from the surrounding built up area or to serve the whole or significant parts of London.</p> <p>The woodland at the park limits many of the views across it. It slopes uphill from south to north. The park is entirely free from development and the tree cover limits any potential impact the surrounding development might have on the perception of openness at the open space. It is considered that this area of land displays Strong Openness.</p>	<p>does not link directly to an existing portion of MOL. Considering the above and that it is of a smaller size and identified as a local urban green space through the open space hierarchy work it does not perform strongly against the other MOL designation criteria in the London Plan.</p> <p>It is not recommended that this area of land is considered further for designation as a new standalone area of MOL.</p>
PotMOL4 (Land at Erith Quarry)	The land is located to the north of the borough within Erith. The land comprises the village green, ecological corridors and areas which are to be provided at the new mixed use development scheme at Erith Quarry. The outer edges of the green space to be maintained as part of the development are established woodland with a large area of retained grassland towards the north-western corner in close proximity to Riverdale Road. The areas maintained as public open spaces are to be connected by two green corridors thereby creating a continuous green loop. The land gently slopes uphill from the north to south away from Fraser Road.	<p>The land is does not form an extension to the network of green infrastructure in Bexley and furthermore is not of a size to be clearly distinguishable from the surrounding built up area or to serve the whole or significant parts of London. The land contains part of Erith Quarry and Fraser Road SINC. This SINC has Grade I status and therefore has importance in the context of the wider borough.</p> <p>Much of the land to be retained as open space as part of the development is to provide new landscaping and planting which will limit visual openness in places. The woodland edges will also have a similar role in terms of preventing views across the land. These features will also prevent the surrounding existing development from significantly impacting upon the perception of openness at this land, however. Much of the new ecological corridor space to be provided will be fragmented by access roads and is furthermore to be set amongst significant elements of residential development. These sections of green space are to be relatively narrow which will limit the perception of openness within them. While the new village green provided towards the southern portion of the development site is to be set amongst new residential development it is to be of a more substantial size meaning the sense of openness to be maintained will be stronger at</p>	<p>While this land contains a biodiversity feature which is of importance at a borough level it would not form an extension to the existing network of green infrastructure and does not perform strongly against the other MOL designation criteria in the London Plan. This is particularly considered to be the case given that this portion of land would not be likely to serve either the whole or significant parts of London. The open space to be retained as ecological planting, ecological corridors and a new village green would not retain a strong perception of openness across its entirety given its layout amongst new development and access roads.</p> <p>It is therefore not recommended that this area of land is considered further for designation as MOL.</p>

MOL reference	Description of land considered for designation as MOL	Consideration against the London Plan MOL criteria and assessment of openness	Potential for further consideration of land as part of MOL?
		this location. Considered as a whole this area of land is likely to display Moderate Openness .	
PotMOL5 (Land to west of Crayford Rough)	The land is located towards the eastern boundary of the borough at the edge of Crayford. The land comprises scrubland with some young and mature tree cover present along parts of the western and southern boundary in particular. To the north the River Cray forms the boundary of this portion of land and a footpath runs alongside the waterbody. The eastern boundary is formed by existing industrial development along Greyhound Way.	<p>The land sits immediately to the east of the current Green Belt boundary by Crayford. It would not form an immediate extension of an area of MOL in the borough. It sits adjacent to land within the River Cray SINC and Crayford Rough SINC and displays a similarly open character to these areas with areas of scrub and young woodland across much of the area. The SINC's have been identified as being of metropolitan value. The existing areas of woodland act to prevent views across the land, particularly towards the south.</p> <p>This area of land is free of significant development. The existing industrial development to the east long Greyhound Way is visible from parts of this area of land with the tree cover present limiting outward views in this direction in many places. Considered as a whole this area of land displays Relatively Strong Openness</p>	<p>This area of land is surrounded by land which forms part of the wider Green Belt which lies between Bexley and Crayford. Much of the land which surrounds the land being considered for designation as MOL also falls within the River Cray SINC and/or Crayford Rough SINC. These areas have been identified as being of metropolitan value. It has been proposed that Crayford Rough SINC to the west of the site is extended to include the land being considered. However, at present the land does not contain any features of metropolitan value or higher. It is acknowledged that the land links to a strategic green corridor, however, it would not form an immediate extension of an area of MOL in the borough. In all the land does not perform strongly against any of the other MOL designation criteria in the London Plan.</p> <p>It is therefore not recommended that this area of land is considered further for designation as MOL. It may be appropriate to consider this area of land further as a potential addition to the Green Belt. This would need to be undertaken as part of a wider assessment of Green Belt land within the borough.</p>

Summary of Metropolitan Open land findings

Openness Assessment and proposed minor boundary amendments

8.14 A review of the MOL in Bexley has demonstrated that 53.84ha of the total 643.1ha MOL in the borough displays Weak/No Openness. These are the areas where the Council might focus its consideration of land for potential release from the designation.

8.15 As set out in **Table 8.1** earlier in this chapter, these areas lie within the following parcels:

- MOL1c (specifically the land at Crossness Sewage Treatment Works to the north of Eastern Way and the land at Tavy Bridge to the north of Yarnton Way);

- MOL3 (specifically the land at the grounds of East Wickham Infant and Nursery School and East Wickham Primary Academy);
- MOL4 (specifically the land to the south of Hillview Cemetery and the land by Bellegrove Road);
- MOL5 (specifically the land at Bexley Grammar School);
- MOL7 (specifically the land at Haberdashers' Aske's Crayford Academy); and
- MOL10 (specifically the land at Chislehurst and Sidcup Grammar School and the land at Hurstmere School).

8.16 A further 0.13ha is suggested for consideration to be added to MOL designation in Bexley through minor boundary amendments. **Table 8.3** below presents a summary of the recommended minor boundary adjustments to the MOL designation in Bexley.

Table 8.3: Recommended minor boundary adjustments

MOL reference and name	Recommended minor boundary adjustment
MOL6 (Land at Woodside Road including Martens Grove Park)	The boundary of the MOL at the northern portion of Martens Grove Park could be extended to include all of the land within the park. Land to the immediate south west of Groveland Park Care Home is currently excluded.
MOL9 (Land at Shenstone Park)	The boundary of this area of MOL to the south west at the junction of London Road and Orchard Hill omits a section of Shenstone Park. The boundary could be adjusted to reflect the boundaries of the park but omit the area of hardstanding beyond the entrance of the park.

Consideration of potential new MOL

8.17 Of the five areas subjected to detailed assessment, the land at Thamesmead Ecology Study (PotMOL1) is considered to have the greatest potential to be designated as MOL. This area of land would best meet the criteria for MOL set out in the London Plan. The designation of this area of land as MOL would add 5.01ha to the overall area of designation.

8.18 The areas of land considered at PotMOL2, PotMOL3, PotMOL4 and PotMOL5 are not considered to adequately fulfil the criteria for designating new MOL set out in the London Plan.

8.19 A summary of the findings for the areas considered for potential addition to the MOL designation in the borough is presented in **Table 8.4** below.

Table 8.4: Summary of potential new MOL additions

MOL reference and name	Potential for amendment
PotMOL1 (Land at Thamesmead Ecology Study Area)	This area of land forms an extension to the existing MOL land to the south (MOL1c) and displays a similar level of openness to this area. This area of land also links to a strategic green corridor and contains a biodiversity feature of borough importance. The land is therefore recommended for further consideration as MOL.
PotMOL2 (Land at the River Shuttle taking in Bexley Park Wood)	This area of land would form an extension to the MOL at Lamborey Park/Sidcup Golf Course (MOL10). The land at the River Shuttle and through Bexley Park Woods forms part of a strategic green corridor and contains biodiversity features of borough importance. However, it does not perform strongly against any of the other MOL designation criteria in the London Plan. With the exception of the land within Bexley Park

MOL reference and name	Potential for amendment
	Woods the land is linear for almost its entire length with roads crossing its path meaning that it is somewhat disjointed, and the level of openness displayed has been negatively impacted upon in many places. It is therefore not recommended that this land is designated as MOL.
PotMOL3 (Land at Frank's Park)	Although this area of land is connected to the South East Green Chain, and it contains biodiversity features of borough importance it would not form an extension to the MOL designation in the borough. Furthermore, it does not perform strongly against any of the other MOL designation criteria in the London Plan. It is therefore not recommended that this land is designated as MOL.
PotMOL4 (Land at Erith Quarry)	While this area of land contains a biodiversity feature which is of importance at a borough level it would not form an extension to the existing network of green infrastructure. The land at Erith Quarry also does not perform strongly against the other MOL criteria in the London Plan. This is particularly considered to be the case given that this portion of land would not be likely to serve either the whole or significant parts of London. Furthermore, the open space to be retained at this location is unlikely to retain a strong perception across its entirety given its layout amongst new development and access roads. It is therefore not recommended that this area of land is considered further for designation as MOL.
PotMOL5 (Land to west of Crayford Rough)	This area of land is surrounded by land which forms part of the wider Green Belt which lies between Bexley and Crayford. Much of the surrounding land also falls within the River Cray SINC and/or Crayford Rough SINC, both of which are of metropolitan value. The land links to a strategic green corridor, however, it would not form an immediate extension of an area of MOL in the borough. In all the land does not perform strongly against any of the other MOL designation criteria in the London Plan. It is therefore not recommended that this area of land is considered further for designation as MOL. It may be appropriate to consider this area of land as a potential addition to the Green Belt. This would need to be undertaken as part of a wider assessment of Green Belt land within the borough.

8.20 It is recommended that the borough considers these potential amendments on a case by case basis. Changes to MOL boundaries will need to be considered through the Local Plan making process making use of the assessment of openness alongside other evidence such the Council's Sustainability Appraisal and the appropriateness of existing uses within MOL. Any changes should also be considerate of the advantages and disadvantages of making changes to the extent of the designation in its current form.

8.21 It is also recommended that should further work to present an 'exceptional circumstances' case to make alterations to the borough's MOL boundaries be undertaken, that the need for an equivalent assessment of Green Belt should be considered. This approach will ensure that *all* reasonable alternatives have been considered as part of the plan making process.