Barnsley's Green Space Strategy

Contents Page

Barnsley's Green Space Strategy

1 Introduction

1   This document is our Green Space Strategy for the borough which sets out our overall strategy for green space and the standards of green space we want to achieve.

2   A separate map called the Green Space Register gives up to date information on the provision of green space. The Green Space Strategy and the Green Space register informs local assessments of green space that we use when making decisions on planning applications and decisions about where to spend money to improve green spaces

3   Details of how we will use the Green Space Strategy to make decisions about green space are given in section 4 of this document.

2 Background

National policy guidance

4   The Government sets out planning policies for local authorities in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraphs 73-75, with associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) 'Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space'. This recognises the importance of providing open spaces, sport and recreation, and the contribution that they make to people's quality of life.

5   It also says that plan policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision.

6   The Green Space Strategy was adopted in 2006. This 2016 update has reviewed the Green Space Strategy against current planning guidance and has concluded that it is still consistent with the NPPF and PPG.

Links with other strategies

7   There are a number of other council strategies that feed into the Green Space Strategy, including:

- the Playing Pitch Strategy;
- the Sports facilities Strategy;
- the Sport and Active Lifestyle Strategy
- Barnsley's Development Plan; and
- the Biodiversity Action Plan.

8   The Green Space Strategy will influence any future review of these strategies.

The Playing Pitch Strategy and the Sports Facilities Strategy

9   These documents guide the future provision and management of outdoor and indoor sports facilities to serve existing and new communities in the borough. In line with the Government's National Planning Policy Framework, the strategies assess facilities, the future need for sport and active recreation and, as the borough grows and develops, opportunities for new provision and expansion of existing facilities.

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The Sport and Active Lifestyle Strategy

10   This strategy aims to improve access to the opportunities to being active.

Barnsley's Development Plan

11   The current Development Plan was adopted in 2011, and guides Barnsley's development to 2026. Since its adoption the NPPF has been published, which requires local authorities to produce a Local Plan. Like the current Development Plan, the Local Plan will contain policies about green spaces. The Green Space Strategy will help us to apply these policies and make decisions about green spaces.

The local Biodiversity Action Plan

12   Produced by Barnsley Biodiversity Action Partnership, the local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) defines the issues, species and habitats that are under threat and in need of most urgent action in Barnsley. It also outlines the approach that will be taken to tackle the national and international challenge to protect them.

3 How we consulted people

13   The Green Space Strategy is about green spaces and people. It is influenced by the views of a wide range of people, including:

- householders;
- people who use green space;
- children and young people;
- ethnic-minority and other groups;
- people who do not use green space;
- visitors to Barnsley;
- staff; and
- other landowners.

14   We also encouraged people to set up friends' groups (people who have come together to give support, volunteer help and apply pressure to change or improve green space).

15   We asked local people what they thought in different ways, including at a meeting of the local area forum and a related surgery and by using the internet.

4 What green space is

16   Green spaces are 'green' open areas. They include village greens, local open spaces, country parks, formal gardens, cemeteries, allotments, woodlands, wildlife areas, recreation grounds, sports pitches and parks.

17   Green space is an important environmental asset. It is also an important social asset, often used by people for healthy outdoor activities. It includes public and private open spaces because both can be of public value. While private spaces, such as private sports grounds, hospital or school grounds and churchyards, may not be open to the public, they can improve the quality of the local environment and the appearance of an area.

The different types of green space

18   The Green Space Strategy sets out seven different types of green space. These are as follows.

- Parks and open spaces
- Child and youth facilities
- Outdoor sports facilities, including school playing fields
- Green ways – paths and other open routes that provide links between housing, countryside and services, used for leisure, for access to work and services, and for wildlife migration (moving from one place to another)
- Natural and semi-natural areas
- Allotments
- Churchyards and cemeteries

19   Private gardens, unless they are really important to the appearance of the local area, small grass verges along roads, and civic space (mainly hard-surfaced public spaces such as town squares, pedestrian streets and other hard-surfaced open areas in towns) are not included as green space.

How we decide if land is green space

20   It is often easy to tell if a piece of land is green space or not, because it obviously fits into one of the types of green space set out above. However, this is not always the case.

21   The 'open spaces' type is sometimes particularly difficult. When is a piece of land an 'open' green space and when is it just a piece of open land?

22   We judge whether a piece of land is green space of any type by looking at its attributes. These are the main features of the land and how it is used. All green spaces have one or more of the attributes listed below. If a piece of land does not have any of these, then it is not green space.

23   For land to be green space, it must:

- have a positive effect on the appearance of the local area;
- be a space in a town or village that is needed to get the right balance between buildings and open areas;
- be used for formal recreation such as organised games, or informal recreation such as an area for children to kick a ball about in;
- be a place for cultural activities such as fairs, fetes or festivals;
- be used by people to meet, relax or simply to enjoy the space;
- be used by wildlife or have a role to play in protecting wildlife and nature;
- have an existing or possible role as a place to learn, for example, about wildlife; and
- encourage healthy lifestyles.

24   We will use the list above to judge if land is green space when we make decisions on planning applications. If a piece of land fits one or more of the conditions in the list above, we will treat it as green space even if it is not shown as green space on the Green Space Register.

The categories of green space

25   This Green Space Strategy sorts some of the types of green space into different categories. The categories partly reflect our accessibility standards, which is how far people should expect to go to get to different types of green spaces. It is expected that people will be willing to travel further to larger green spaces with more facilities, but all residents should have local green spaces within easy walking distance.

26   The different categories of green space are shown in the table below.

Type of green space	Category of green space	Summary of what this space is
Parks and open	Local neighbourhood green	A casual area of open space to meet local

Type of green space	Category of green space	Summary of what this space is
spaces	space	recreation needs. While often not equipped, they may have some play equipment like goalposts, rebound walls or hard surfaces for basketball or skateboard ramps.
	District green space	These typically serve more than one town or village and have facilities for formal and informal recreation.
	Borough green space	These serve the whole borough and are major leisure attractions for large numbers of visitors.
	Regional and subregional green space	These serve the whole borough and areas beyond. They are our biggest leisure attractions for very large numbers of people.
Child and youth facilities	Equipped play area	These are mostly for young children and are close to houses. They tend to be small areas with some play equipment.
	Local equipped area for play	Mainly for four- to eight- year-olds, these have at least five types of fixed play equipment.
	Neighbourhood equipped area for play	Mainly for children unaccompanied by an adult, these are aimed at eight- to 14- year-olds. They have at least eight types of fixed play equipment.
	Youth facility	These are for young people to meet and play, and often have a shelter. They may have BMX tracks, skateboard or rollerblade parks, street basketball courts and games walls.
Outdoor sports facilities	Local neighbourhood sports facility	These serve local recreation needs, ranging from informal 'kick-about' areas to pitches for lower levels of league play. They are typically on publicly accessible land with no changing facilities.
	District sports facility	These are good-quality recreation grounds with decent sports pitches and facilities, for example, changing rooms. Their main use is for sport activities.
	Borough sports facility	These serve the whole borough and are often 'professionally' managed. They have good pitches and facilities, including for spectators, and cater for clubs and higher league competitions.
Green ways	No category	These are paths and other open routes that provide links between housing, countryside and services. They are used for leisure, for access to work and services areas, and for wildlife migration.
Natural and semi-natural areas	No category	These are spaces that contain plants and trees and are used by wildlife. They can be land, water or geological features, such as a cave.

Type of green space	Category of green space	Summary of what this space is
Allotments	No category	These are areas used for growing vegetables

		and other produce.
Churchyards and cemeteries	No category	While used for burial, these are also areas for quiet contemplation. They are often used by wildlife.

27 We have put some of the types of green space into different categories for the following reasons.

- It helps to create a more accurate picture of the value of the green space. It shows more clearly what facilities that green space provides. For example, a local neighbourhood green space will not have the same type, level or quality of facilities as a district green space or borough green space.
- It helps us to set standards for how far people should expect to go to get to the green space. Our standards are set out in the next section of this document. It is reasonable to expect that people would be happy to travel further to get to a larger green space with more facilities than to a smaller one with fewer facilities.
- It helps us to assess more accurately where there is a good range of green spaces and facilities, and where there may not be such a good range. It is important for us to know this when we make decisions about protecting green spaces or about spending money on existing ones.

Why green space is so important

28 Barnsley has a wide variety of open green spaces that have come about naturally or have been created over many years. These green spaces help to shape what the borough looks like and how people live. They are also home to many species of wildlife, including endangered animal species. Green spaces give wildlife the habitats they need to survive.

29 Green spaces make an important contribution to our quality of life and provide social and environmental benefits which, in turn, have a positive impact on the local economy. The value of good quality green space can be quantified through such things as: -.

Environmental benefits

30 Green spaces:

- improve the appearance of built-up areas and give a high-quality setting for buildings;
- add to the character of conservation areas, listed buildings and historic landscapes;
- provide places for wildlife to exist and opportunities for people to see wildlife;
- give important opportunities for people and animals to shade from the sun;
- help to keep the temperature and humidity down in urban areas;

- help to reduce noise from traffic and other noise;
- help to absorb pollution, such as carbon dioxide from car exhausts;
- help to control rainwater, particularly during storms;
- relieve pressure on the countryside by giving people somewhere local to go and be outdoors;
- create an area of open space between built areas, which helps neighbourhoods to be distinct and separate from each other; and
- link towns and villages with the countryside.

Social benefits

31   Green spaces:

- help to develop communities by giving people a place where they can meet other people and make new friends;
- help to develop stronger families by giving families a place to go and visit together, outside the home and away from the television or household chores;
- help to reduce crime;
- give people a place where they can do leisure and recreation activities, including doing active sports, and where children can play;
- are places where people can go to relax;
- are places where people can learn; and
- can benefit mental and physical health. Access to good-quality green spaces can help prevent physical and mental ill health by providing places where people can both exercise and relax. It can also help to speed up recovery from ill health and plays a vital role in our mental wellbeing.

Economic benefits

32   Green spaces help:

- improve urban areas by creating a place that is attractive to businesses and tourists;
- create a better, more attractive place to work;
- add value to land and property;
- encourage inward investment and job creation;
- create favourable images of the area;
- create a better working environment;
- develop a happier workforce; and
- complement new developments.

5 Why we need the Green Space Strategy

33   We need the Green Space Strategy so we can make good decisions about green spaces in a well-planned, co-ordinated way. The strategy helps us to know what green spaces each town and village needs and what improvements we need to make.

34   We have to make a lot of decisions about green space as a normal part of our day-to-day work. We decide:
- whether individual green spaces should be built on or protected from development;
- whether new green spaces should be created as part of new developments or existing ones improved; and
- which green spaces we should spend money on improving and how we should improve them.

35   We make the first two of these three decisions when we decide planning applications. Our development plan, the Core Strategy, protects green spaces from development. However, it does allow green spaces to be built on if they are not needed. We will use this strategy to help decide how important each green space is and whether it should be protected from development or could be built on.

36   Green Space policies in the Development Plan require developers to create new green spaces as part of new housing developments, or improve existing green spaces nearby. This strategy will help us decide what kind of new green space developers should create, or which existing green space they should improve.

37   We make the third of the three decisions listed above because we are responsible for looking after many of the green spaces in the borough. For example, the Council and partners manage and maintain a wide variety of green spaces including play areas, parks, football pitches, wildlife areas, allotments and many other types of green space. This strategy will help us decide which green spaces we should spend money on to improve them, and what we should spend the money on.

38   The Green Space Strategy will help us make these decisions by setting out the following.
- Our vision for green space and our aims to achieve the vision
- Our standards for each type of green space
- An assessment of the quantity, accessibility and quality of the green spaces in each town and village in the borough
- Our priorities for green space in each town and village in the borough

Our vision for green space

To provide, manage and maintain a green environment that improves everyone's quality of life by making sure that the importance of green space is at the heart of our main decisions.

What we want the Green Space Strategy to achieve

39   We want the Green Space Strategy to achieve our vision for green space. The strategy has five aims that will help us to do this. The aims are set out below.

- To protect important green spaces from development
- To create new green spaces and to improve existing ones
- To create and protect a network of green ways that develop links between green spaces, towns and villages and the countryside
- To encourage everyone to use green spaces by making sure there are enough of them of the right type and quality in places where people can easily get to them
- To make sure we look after and maintain our green spaces so they continue to be used by everyone, now and in the next generation

6 How the Green Space Strategy works

40   Our Green Space Strategy is made up of this document and the Green Space Register, which shows the up to date provision of green space at any given time.

41   Put simply, this document sets out the standards we want to achieve for each type of green space. The standards are shown in appendix 1. .

42   When assessing proposals we judge all existing green spaces in the area against our standards. This then shows where we need to improve green spaces and what improvements we need to make.

43   The policies in the Development Plan are also essential for the Green Space Strategy to work. We will make sure we take the Green Space Strategy into account when we make decisions about planning applications and apply the policies about green space in the Development Plan.

Our standards for each type of green space

44   To make our vision for green space a reality, we must make sure there are enough good-quality green spaces across the borough that people and wildlife can get to easily. We have set out in appendix 1 our standards for each type of green space in relation to:

- **quantity –** making sure each town and village has enough green space of each type;
- **accessibility –** how far people should expect to go to get to green spaces;
- **quality –** the quality of the space people should expect to find; and
- **value –** the importance people give to the green spaces.

45   As shown in appendix 1, we have given different accessibility standards for towns and villages in rural areas to those in urban areas. This shows that people should not have to travel so far to reach green spaces in urban areas. This is because urban areas are more densely populated, so each green space is likely to be used by more people. Urban areas often form a centre for surrounding rural villages so urban green spaces are likely to be used by people from rural areas. Also, people living in rural villages often have access to the countryside for recreation activities such as walking and horse riding, and so don't rely as much on formal green space within the village.

46   We generally consider towns and villages with a population of under 3,000 people to be rural. Appendix 3 lists all the towns and villages in the borough and shows which are urban and which are rural.

47   Our standards for each type of green space show what we want to achieve over time. They are very high standards that we cannot expect to reach quickly. We believe that, once we meet our standards, Barnsley borough will be a much greener, better place, offering people the best quality of life it can.

48   As well as setting out our standards, we also have a general guide about what green spaces people should expect to find in each town and village. This does vary, as not all towns and villages can have all types of green space in them. In general, larger towns and villages should have more types of green space. Details about this are set out in our general guide in appendix 4.

49   We have done an audit of all the green spaces in the borough and have drawn them all on an electronic, computer-based map called the Green Space Register. This map shows all the green spaces in the borough that we know of.

50   The purpose of the Green Space Strategy and Green Space Register is to assess the green spaces in each town and village in the borough and to set out our priorities for protecting and improving those green spaces. The assessments look at the following.

- **The quantity of green space** – whether there are generally enough green spaces of each type.
- **The accessibility of green space** – how far people have to travel to get to green spaces.
- **The quality of every green space** – whether the green spaces are good quality or not.
- **The value of every green space** – the importance people give to the green spaces.
- **The combined quality and value of every green space** – this assessment helps us to judge which spaces should be given the highest level of protection from development, which spaces need to be improved and which may no longer be needed for their present purpose.

How we assess the quantity, accessibility and quality of green space

51   We assess the quantity, accessibility and quality of green space against the standards set out in appendix 1 of this document. The standards are different for each type and category of green space.

How we assess the value of green space

52   The 'value' of a green space may be very different from its quality. As with everything, value is about what importance people give to something. The value of a green space is affected by the following.

- **Its context.** A green space that is difficult to get to may be of little value, no matter how high quality it is. In an area where there is a lot of green space, some of it may have little value even though it is of good quality. In an area where there is not much green space, even a space of low quality may be valuable.
- **How much it is used and what it is used for.** Well-used green spaces are always of high value, while spaces that are not used much may have less value. This applies equally to spaces used by wildlife as those used by people.
- **The wider benefits** the space has for people, wildlife and the environment.

53   The Strategy helps us to determine the 'value' of each green space. We have asked local people what they think about each green space, and this has helped us with the assessment.

54   The value of a green space depends on what benefits the space has and how it helps to improve our quality of life. Our assessment judges the value of each green space against the following possible benefits.

- **Benefits to the overall shape and identity of the town or village** – whether the space is in a good position and helps to define the identity of the town or village by separating it from other built areas.
- **Benefits to the character of the local area** – whether the space helps to give the area a distinct local feel that is different from other neighbourhoods, or helps to make the area an attractive place to live.
- **Benefits to ecology** – whether the space has wildlife habitats or features of geological interest.
- **Benefits to education** – whether the space gives people the chance to see nature at work or to look at how people have shaped the natural environment – whether the space is an 'outdoor classroom'.
- **Cultural and heritage benefits** – whether the space itself is considered to be of historic importance, or whether it contributes to the character or setting of a historic building or area.

- **Benefits to the community and health** – whether the space is a high-quality park or has sport and recreation facilities – whether the space encourages people to take pride in their community.
- **Benefits to the economy** – whether the space helps to promote economic development.

55   We give each green space a value score, between zero and five, for each of the possible benefits listed above. We then use the overall score for each green space to judge whether that space is of high or low value.

How we combine quality and value

56   We also assess the quality and value of each green space together. We do this so we can judge which spaces should be given the highest level of protection from development, which spaces need to be improved and which may no longer be needed for their present purpose.

57   There are four possible outcomes of this quality and value assessment. These are shown in the table below along with a description of the decisions we will need to make for each outcome.

High quality and low value	High quality and high value
• We will firstly try to improve the value of the space without changing its main use. • If this is not possible, we will consider changing the main use of the space to improve its value. • Only if both of the above are not possible will we consider allowing the space to be built on.	• This is the category we want all green spaces to achieve. • We will protect all spaces in this category from development.
Low quality and low value	**Low quality and high value**
• We will firstly try to improve the quality of the space if this will improve its value. • If this is not possible, the space may not be needed and we may allow it to be built on.	• We will try to improve the quality of the space. • We will protect all spaces in this category from development.

How we use our assessments to set out the priorities for green space

58   The strategy helps us to determine the priorities for green space. For example, in areas where there is not enough green space, this may be to create new spaces. In areas where there is more than enough green space, this may be to improve the quality of one or two of the most important spaces where the largest number of people would benefit from better facilities.

59   It also helps us determine the priorities for green space. For example, in areas short of green space where the priority is to create new ones, we can achieve this by making sure developers create new green spaces as part of developments. Where the priority is to improve existing spaces, we can do this

by asking developers to make the improvements needed instead of creating new green spaces as part of developments.

60   We will use the Green Space Strategy and Green Space Register when we make decisions on planning applications. We will use them to judge whether a green space is needed and should be protected from development or whether it is not needed and can be built on.

61   If a planning application for housing is made to us, in certain circumstances we will ask the developer to either create a green space as part of the development or improve an existing green space. Details of when we will do this are set out in the Development Plan.

62   We will undertake a green space assessment to decide whether a new green space is needed within a development site or whether improvements should be made to an existing green space nearby, and also to decide what type of green space is most appropriate and what facilities should be provided. If we think that improvements should be made to an existing green space, the green space assessment will help us to determine which space should be improved.

63   We will also use the green space assessment to decide how and where we will spend any money we secure to improve and maintain green spaces.

7 How and when we will review the Green Space Strategy

64   This document was originally adopted in 2006 and was the first time we set out a strategy for dealing with green spaces and the standards we want to achieve.

65   This 2016 update has reviewed the Green Space Strategy against current planning policy guidance and has concluded that the standards above are still relevant and consistent with the NPPF and PPG and do not need to change.

66   Further review will be undertaken as necessary in line with any future changes to national planning policy. Any future proposed changes to standards will be subject to public consultation.

Appendix 1
Our standards for green space

67 This appendix sets out our standards for green space in relation to:

- **quantity –** making sure each town and village has enough green space of each type;
- **accessibility –** how far people should expect to go to get to green spaces; and
- **quality –** the quality of the space people should expect to find.

68 Our standards for accessibility and quality are shown in the tables below.

Our standards for quantity – how we will judge if each town and village has enough green space of each type

69 The strategy starts from the green spaces we have already. This is the best approach for those types of green space for which there will be very few, if any, realistic opportunities to make new spaces. In these circumstances, it will be important to make the most of the quality and accessibility of existing green spaces. The most obvious examples are large parks and those wildlife areas which cannot be recreated, such as ancient woodland.

70 The accessibility standard says how close together green spaces should be. Most of the quality standards say what size green spaces should be. The combination of these things set the amount of green space there should be of each type in any given area.

71 For example, there should be a local neighbourhood green space within 400 metres of every home in an urban area. Local neighbourhood green spaces should be at least 0.2 hectares in area. So, as long as there is one local neighbourhood green space of 0.2 hectares in area within 400 metres of every home, there is enough of that green space in the local area.

72 Our test for the quantity of green spaces is that there is enough of any type of green space in any given area as long as our accessibility and quality standards are met. Because of this, we do not need to set out specific standards for how much green space of each type each town and village should have.

73 Appendix 3 shows which towns and villages in the borough are urban and which are rural.

Parks and open spaces

Category of green space	Our standard for how far you should expect to travel from your house to get to the green space (maximum distance)		Our standard for quality
	In urban areas	In rural areas	
Local neighbourhood green space	400 metres	800 metres	Local standard Minimum size: 0.2 hectares in area
District green space	800 metres	1,200 metres	Green Flag standard Minimum size: one hectare in area
Borough green space	3,000 metres	5,000 metres	Green Flag standard
Regional and sub regional green space	5,000 metres	5,000 metres	

74   Our local standard applies to a number of the different types of green space. It is set out in appendix 2.

75   The Green Flag standard is the standard set by the Green Flag Award. The Green Flag Award scheme is the national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales. It is managed by the Civic Trust on behalf of the Government and the Green Flag Advisory Board.

76   To get a Green Flag Award for a green space, an application must be made to the Civic Trust. They will judge whether the green space meets their high standards.

77   We will apply for a Green Flag Award when we think a park or open space meets the Green Flag standard.

Child and youth facilities

Category of green space	Our standard for how far you should expect to travel from your house to get to the green space (maximum distance)		Our standard for quality
	In urban areas	**In rural areas**	
Equipped play area	400 metres	800 metres	Local standard
Local equipped area for play	400 metres	800 metres	National Playing Fields Association 'Six Acre Standard'
Neighbourhood equipped area for play	1,000 metres	2,000 metres	Local standard
Youth facilities	1,200 metres	No maximum distance	Local standard

78   Our local standard applies to a number of the different types of green space. It is set out in appendix 2.

79   The 'Six Acre Standard' is set out in detail in 'The Six Acre Standard – Minimum standards for outdoor playing space 2001', published by the National Playing Fields Association.

Outdoor sports facilities

Category of green space	Our standard for how far you should expect to travel from your house to get to the green space (maximum distance)	Our standard for quality
Local neighbourhood sports facility	1,200 metres	Local standard
District sports facility	No maximum distance	Local standard
Borough sports facility	No maximum distance	Local standard

80   Our local standard applies to a number of the different types of green space. It is set out in appendix 2.

Green ways

81   We are currently working on the details of all our standards for green ways. These will be set out in detail when we review our standards in a year's time, as described above.

82   In the meantime, we will make decisions about green ways on a case-by-case basis. For example, where a new green way is needed as part of a development, we will decide the standards it should meet through discussions with the developer.

Natural and semi-natural areas

Category of green space	Our standard for how far you should expect to travel from your house to get to the green space (maximum distance)	Our standard for quality	
No categories	800 metres	Minimum size: two hectares in area	English Nature's accessible natural green space standard
	2,000 metres	Minimum size: 20 hectares in area	
	5,000 metres	Minimum size: 100 hectares in area	Local standard
	10,000 metres	Minimum size: 500 hectares in area	

83   Our local standard applies to a number of the different types of green space. It is set out in appendix 2.

84   English Nature's accessible natural green space standard is set out in detail in English Nature's Research Report Number 153, 'Accessible natural green space in towns and cities: a review of appropriate size and distance criteria', published in 1995.

Allotments

Category of green space	Our standard for how far you should expect to travel from your house to get to the green space (maximum distance)	Our standard for quality
No categories	1,000 metres	Local allotment standard Minimum size for one allotment plot: 250 square metres in area 15 allotment plots for every 1,000 homes

85   Our quality standard for allotments says how big an individual plot should be and how many plots we want to meet people's needs. Each allotment is also assessed against our local allotment standard. This standard is set out in appendix 2.

Churchyards and cemeteries

86   We do not have any standards for churchyards and cemeteries because we do not believe we need any. Both of these will be created as they are needed, that is, when a new church is built or more space is needed for burials. We will continue to manage cemeteries as we do at the moment and make sure they are kept in a good condition.

Appendix 2
Our local standards

This appendix sets out our local quality standard which applies to a number of the different types of green space, and our local allotment quality standard.

Our local standard

87   Our local standard is a local version of the Green Flag quality standard. We have used the Green Flag standards to develop our own local standard. Our assessment judges the quality of each green space against the following.

- **First impressions**
  - How welcoming is the site?
- **Entrances**
  - Whether the entrances are well placed with few unofficial entrances.
  - Whether the entrances are in good condition, for example with new or restored gates, are well maintained, and are clean and tidy.
- **Boundaries**
  - Whether the boundaries are clearly defined and well maintained.
- **Paths within the site**
  - Whether the path layout has logical access points and facilities.
  - Whether the paths are in good condition, are made of appropriate materials, and have a well-defined edge.
- **Access**
  - Whether paths have smooth surfaces with no sunken gulley grates.
  - Whether the path is at least 1.5 metres wide to allow for easy access and passing for wheelchairs and pushchairs. Whether there are resting places with a seat or perch.
  - Whether the paths are a sensible gradient with no drop at the edges.
  - Whether there are any obstructions to movement along the pathways, such as steps, lamp posts, seats, litter and dog bins, and overhanging shrubs.
  - Whether there are areas where people can experience different textures, sounds, smells, shapes, forms, colours and tastes. Examples might include adapted signs using texture, contrast and symbols and fragranced planting.
- **Safety**
  - Whether there are staff present, whether the site is overlooked by houses or a busy route and is well used.
  - Whether there are any signs of vandalism.
  - Whether there are any signs of graffiti.
- **Seats and bins**
  - Whether the number, position and style of seats is appropriate for the type of site.

- Whether the seats and bins are well maintained, painted, and with no vegetation growing through them.
- **Cleanliness**
  - Whether there is any dog mess.
  - Whether there is any litter or rubbish.
  - Whether there is any illegal tipping or dumping.
- **Facilities**
  - Whether the signs and information boards are appropriate for the site and its users, are in good condition, of good quality and are well placed.
  - Whether the 'interpretive material' (for example, boards that explain the habitats and wildlife that you can see in the space, nature trails and educational facilities) is appropriate for the site and its users, is in good condition, of good quality and is well placed.
  - Whether the facility for children and young people is in a good safe place and whether it is in good condition and well maintained.
  - Whether there are any facilities for disabled people.
  - Whether there are any refreshment facilities available and whether they are good quality, for example, having appropriate opening hours, are clean and good value for money.
  - Whether there is an adequate number of suitably sited facilities to service the site.
  - Range of outdoor sports facilities. Whether the outdoor sports facilities are in good condition, well maintained and appropriate to the site. These facilities might include bowling, tennis courts, football, basketball and fishing facilities.
- **Buildings (such as shelters, changing rooms, pavilions and monuments)**
  - Whether any buildings on the site are in good condition and are well maintained.
- **Nature conservation**
  - Whether the site has been sensitively managed and contains varied habitats.
- **Vegetation**
  - Whether the vegetation is interesting and varied with a good range of species and types.
  - Whether the vegetation is well maintained with healthy plants, pruned shrubs, no weed growth and well-defined flower beds.
  - Whether any features are effectively positioned.
- **Trees**
  - Whether the trees are different ages and varieties, and are well maintained, with no dead trees by the paths.
- **Water**
  - Whether the water is well maintained with secure bank sides and edges, and no litter.

- **Car park**
  - Whether the car park is in good condition and well maintained.

88   We will make a note of any special features of the site. These may be historical features, good views, works of art – whatever makes the site different from others.

89   Following an assessment, we give each green space a quality score between zero and five, for each of the 34 possible standards.

90   If for example, a facility, building or water feature is not found on the green space, and would not be expected to be found, we will give a nil score in that criteria. For example, we would not expect to find a play area in a cemetery. But we would expect to find changing rooms on a district sports facility green space. If there were no changing rooms, we would give a score of zero when assessing the condition and maintenance of changing rooms. This is because you cannot score a building that does not, but should, exist.

91   We then work out a total possible score for each site, leaving out the potential score for any standards scored as 'nil'. The maximum score for a green space is 170.

92   We then use the actual overall score for each green space to work out a percentage score for each green space. This is because the total possible score for each site will be different. So, to be able to compare the scores for each site, we need to work out a percentage score. We will then use the final percentage score to judge whether that space is of high or low value.

93   We also give each site a status rating of poor, fair or good, which is linked to whether its condition is declining, stable or improving. This, combined with the percentage score, then gives a picture of the site at the time the assessment was done.

The allotment quality standard

94   We assess the quality of an allotment against the following.

- **Number of tenants**
  - The maximum number of points which can be given is 25.
  - We will work out the percentage of plots on the allotments which have tenants.
  - We then multiply the percentage by 0.25 to give a score out of 25.
  - For example, an allotment where all the plots are used scores 25 points and an allotment where half the plots are used scores $12\frac{1}{2}$ points.

- **Problems**
  - Problems such as vandalism, theft, fly-tipping (dumping rubbish illegally), and the poor condition of fencing and gates are considered to lower the quality of allotments.
  - The maximum number of points which can be given is 25.
  - We will deduct points where a long-term problem exists.
  - If an allotment has two long-term problems, such as vandalism and theft, we will deduct 10 points and record a score of 15.
  - If an allotment has five or more long-term problems, we will deduct all points and record a score of zero.

- **Neighbouring sites**
  - This standard tests whether there are too many or not enough local allotments.
  - The maximum number of points which can be given is 25.
  - We will deduct points for each neighbouring allotment within 1000 metres. If, however, there is a neighbouring site where all the plots are being used, we will not deduct the five points.
  - If there are two neighbouring allotments which have plots available within 1000 metres, we will deduct 10 points and record a score of 15.
  - If there are two neighbouring allotments within 1000 metres, one with plots available and one where all the plots are being used, we will deduct five points and record a score of 20.

- **Condition and importance**
  - We expect a good-quality allotment to have fresh water, well-maintained pathways and fencing, and car parking.
  - We will give each allotment a score between one and 25 relating to its condition and importance.
  - We will record a score of 25 for an allotment that is in excellent condition and is of significant importance.

95   We then use the overall score for each allotment to judge whether that space is of high or low quality.

Appendix 3
Which towns and villages are urban and which are rural

96   The table below shows which towns and villages are urban and which are rural. It relates to the tables in appendix 1, which have different accessibility standards for towns and villages in urban areas to those in rural areas. It also puts each town and village into one of the following categories.

- Urban Barnsley
- Principal Towns
- Villages

97   These categories are used in appendix 4, which gives a general guide to what green spaces you should expect to find in each town and village.

Town or village name	Population	Urban or rural?	Notes
Urban Barnsley			
Barnsley	102,211	Urban	Includes Barnsley town centre, Ardsley, Barugh, Carlton, Darton, Dodworth, Higham, Gawber, and Worsbrough. .
Principal Towns			
Cudworth	8,846	Urban	Includes Grimethorpe and Shafton
Dearne Towns	21,939	Urban	Includes Goldthorpe, Thurnscoe and Bolton upon Dearne.
Hoyland	20,620	Urban	Includes Birdwell, Elsecar, Blacker Hill,Hemingfield and Jump.
Royston	9,356	Urban	
Penistone	6,962	Urban	Including Cubley and Springvale
Wombwell	20,181	Urban	Including Darfield.
Villages			
Great Houghton	2,258	Rural	
Brierley	2,073	Rural	
Silkstone	1,638	Rural	
Silkstone Common	1,263	Rural	
Thurlstone	1,226	Rural	
Thurgoland	1,182	Rural	Does not include Huthwaite.
Cawthorne	1,141	Rural	
Oxspring	1,054	Rural	
Hoylandswaine	1,024	Rural	
Millhouse Green	958	Rural	
Pilley	737	Rural	

Tankersley	569	Rural	
Middlecliff	511	Rural	
Hood Green	400	Rural	
Ingbirchworth	394	Rural	
Wortley	356	Rural	
Green Moor	320	Rural	
Huthwaite	312	Rural	
Crane Moor	311	Rural	
Weetshaw Lane	301	Rural	
Crow Edge	256	Rural	
Broomhill	201	Rural	
Howbrook	197	Rural	
Billingley	185	Rural	
Worsbrough village	178	Rural	
Langsett	147	Rural	
High Hoyland	126	Rural	
Carlecotes	100	Rural	
Dunford Bridge	100	Rural	
Townhead	100	Rural	
Little Houghton	80	Rural	
Swaithe	39	Rural	

Barnsley's Green Space Strategy

Appendix 4
What green spaces you should expect to find in each town and village

98   The table below is a general guide about what green spaces you should expect to find in each town and village. The categories of towns and villages set out in appendix 3 are used in this table.

	Town and village category		
Green space category	**Urban Barnsley**	**Principal Towns**	**Villages**
Parks and open spaces			
Local neighbourhood green space	Yes	Yes	Yes
District green space	Yes	Yes	Possibly
Borough green space	Yes	Possibly	No
Regional and sub regional green space	Possibly	No	No
Child and youth facilities			
Equipped play areas	Yes	Yes	Yes
Local equipped area for play	Yes	Yes	Possibly
Neighbourhood equipped area for play	Yes	Yes	No
Facility for young people	Yes	Yes	Possibly
Outdoor sports facilities			
Local neighbourhood sports facility	Yes	Yes	Yes
District sports facility	Yes	Yes	Possibly
Borough sports facility	Yes	Possibly	No
Green Ways			
	Yes	Yes	Yes
Natural and semi-natural areas			
	Yes	Yes	Yes
Allotments			
	Yes	Yes	Yes
Churchyards and cemeteries			
Churchyards and cemeteries will be created as they are needed, that is, when a new church is built or more space is needed for burials.			