

KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL: OPEN SPACE STUDY (REVISED DECEMBER 2010)

Natural and semi-natural greenspaces

Introduction

- 5.1 The typology of natural and semi natural greenspaces, as set out in 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities: Planning Policy Guidance 17 Companion Guide' includes woodland (coniferous, deciduous, mixed) and scrub, grassland (e.g. downland, meadow), heath or moor, wetlands (e.g. marsh, fen), open running water, wastelands (including disturbed ground), and bare rock habitats (e.g. cliffs, quarries, pits). These provide 'wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness.'
- 5.2 Within this definition, the council has included managed sites, such as urban woodlands and Local Nature Reserves, as well as unmanaged sites, such as derelict land and unused land. Some open spaces are multi functional i.e. can be used for different purposes. However, to ensure that sites are counted only once in the audit of provision they have been classified and assessed based on their primary purpose. Also, some sites can contain a number of open spaces uses and that each of these have been identified and assessed separately.

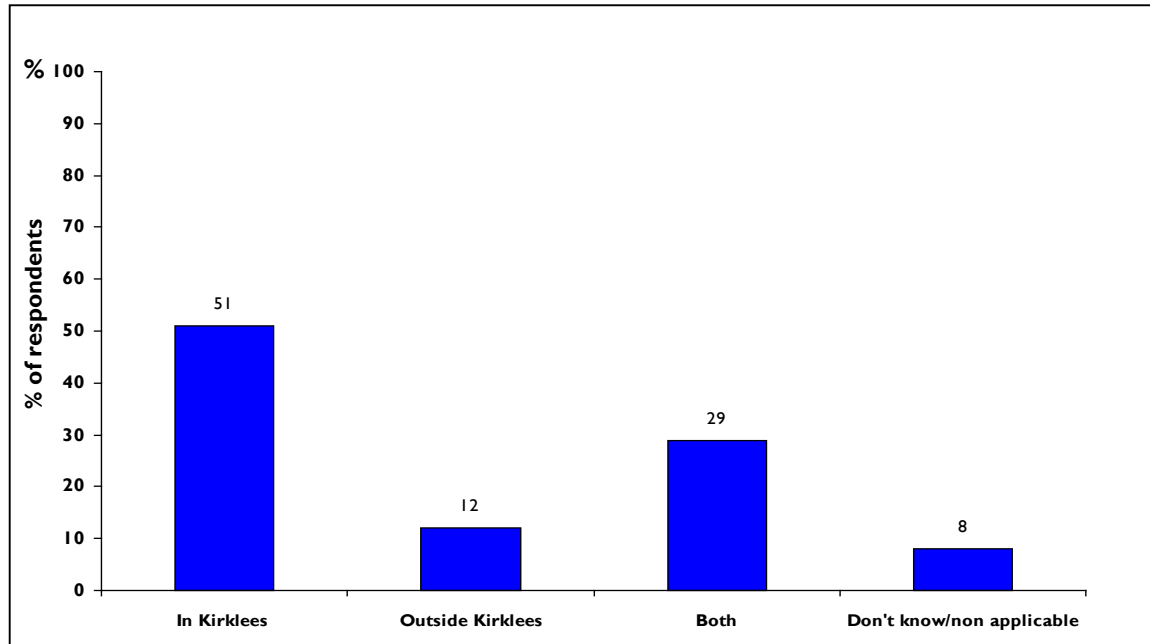
Context

- 5.3 This section outlines findings from the survey of residents in relation to their use of and attitudes towards the provision of natural and semi-natural greenspaces in Kirklees. It provides a context for the subsequent sections, which address the quantity, quality and accessibility of provision.
- 5.4 Results are provided for the descriptions used in the survey itself.

KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL: OPEN SPACE STUDY (REVISED DECEMBER 2010)

Usage

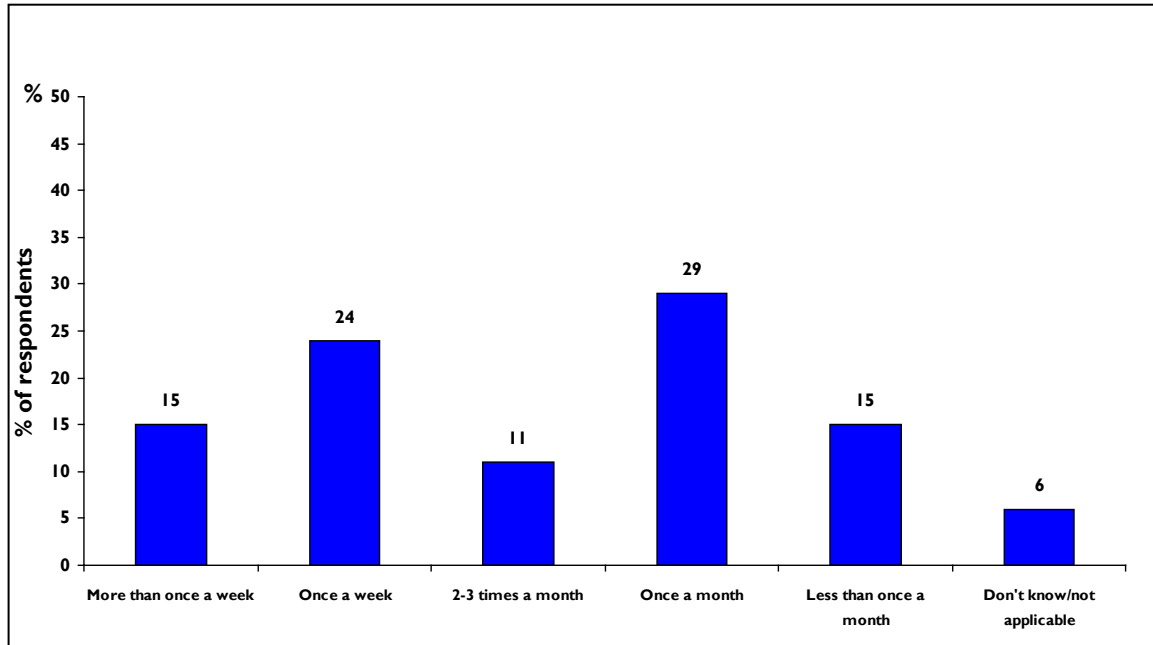
Figure 5.1: Usage of natural and semi-natural greenspaces in the previous 12 months



5.5 In the previous 12 months 21% of respondents have visited a natural or semi-natural area. A large proportion of visits to natural and semi-natural areas take place outside Kirklees (41%). Nonetheless, a relatively greater proportion (80%) had visited sites in Kirklees.

KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL: OPEN SPACE STUDY (REVISED DECEMBER 2010)

Figure 5.2: Frequency of usage of natural and semi-natural greenspaces in the previous 12 months

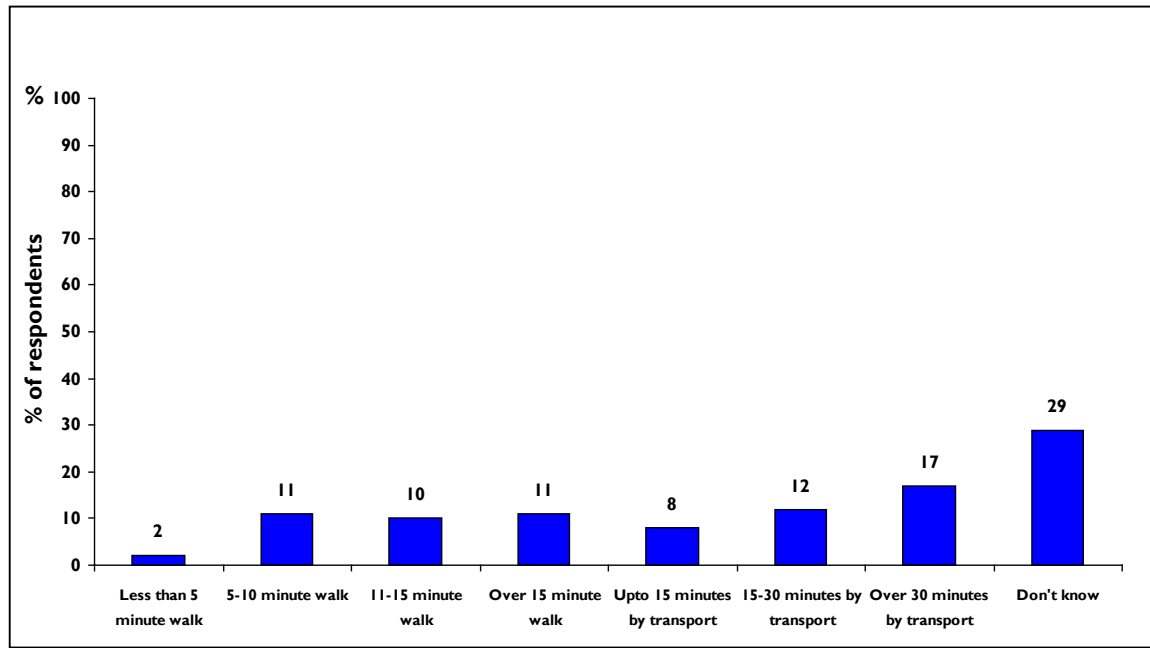


5.6 Amongst those that visit natural and semi-natural greenspaces, the majority visit infrequently in comparison to parks. Nearly half (44%) of those surveyed visit natural and semi-natural greenspaces once a month or less. Natural and semi-natural sites tend to have a more specific appeal than parks and gardens, which may explain the lower frequency of usage.

KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL: OPEN SPACE STUDY (REVISED DECEMBER 2010)

Travel time

Figure 5.3: Time prepared to travel to reach a natural and semi-natural greenspace



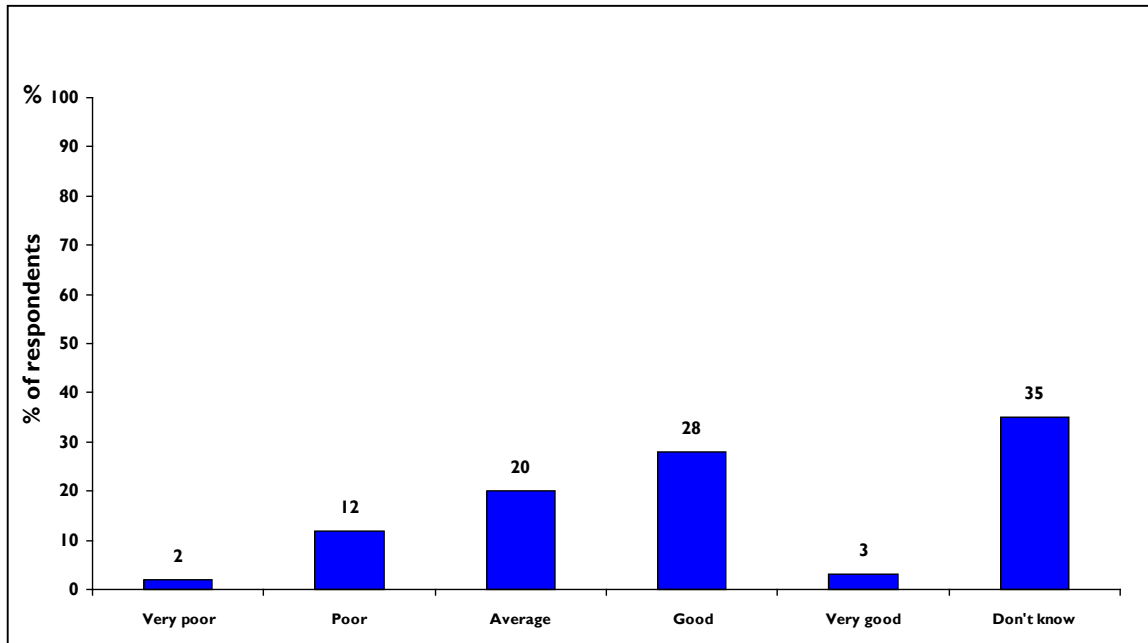
5.7 People are generally prepared to travel by transport to reach a natural and semi-natural greenspace site. The most common response (17%) is to travel over 30 minutes by transport to access a site. The fact that respondents are prepared to travel for such a period of time probably reflects the nature of provision in Kirklees and West Yorkshire and the value placed on these by residents. It is important to note, however, that almost a quarter (23%) would walk no longer than 15 minutes.

KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL: OPEN SPACE STUDY (REVISED DECEMBER 2010)

Quality of provision

5.8 The quality of natural and semi-natural sites is commonly rated as good or very good (31%). However, a significant proportion of those people surveyed (35%) are unable to comment on the quality, reflecting lower overall levels of usage.

Figure 5.4: Quality of provision of natural and semi-natural greenspaces

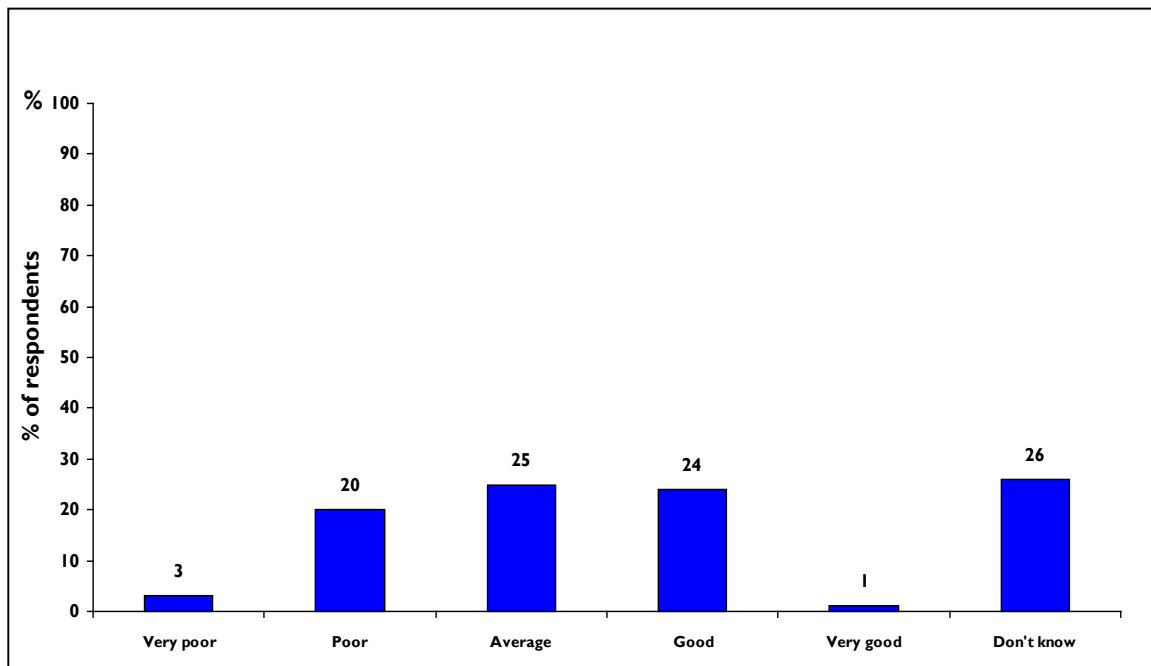


KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL: OPEN SPACE STUDY (REVISED DECEMBER 2010)

Availability

5.9 The rating of the availability of natural and semi-natural greenspaces varies significantly, with 23% rating it as poor or very poor, 25% as average, a further quarter (25%) as good or very good and the final quarter (26%) unable to rate it.

Figure 5.5: Availability of natural and semi-natural greenspaces



KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL: OPEN SPACE STUDY (REVISED DECEMBER 2010)

Key issues

Current provision

- 5.10 In total, there are 586 pieces of land classified as natural and semi-natural greenspaces (including local nature reserves), totalling just over 1,290 hectares.
- 5.11 In accordance with the scope of study, these sites are natural and semi-natural greenspaces predominantly within and on the periphery of the built-up areas of Kirklees. Natural and semi-natural greenspaces within the green belt have not been included within the open space assessment, with the exception of Local Nature Reserves and two woodlands. The two woodlands are Deffer Wood and Upper Dearne Valley Woodlands, which have been included within the analysis as they have formal arrangements to provide public access. There are also 214 pieces of unmanaged natural and semi natural land (unused land with no public access and unused land with public access) which have been included within this typology.

Figure 5.6: Example of formal woodland in Kirklees



KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL: OPEN SPACE STUDY (REVISED DECEMBER 2010)

Figure 5.7: Example of informal unused land in Kirklees



Table 5.1: Distribution of natural and semi-natural greenspaces by analysis area

Analysis area	Natural & semi natural greenspaces		Local nature reserves (LNRs)	
	Pieces of land	Size(ha)	Pieces of land	Size(ha)
Batley, Birstall & Birkenshaw	29	51.83	2*	43.77
Denby Dale, Kirkburton & Mirfield	91	267.96	2	2.40
Dewsbury	46	56.83	2	6.82
Huddersfield North	98	201.91	1	5.50
Huddersfield South	131	313.49	2	23.39
Spenn Valley	33	72.92	-	-
Valleys	149	245.01	-	-
KIRKLEES	577	1209.95	9	81.88

* Oakwell Hall Country Park LNR is also within Parks & Gardens provision

KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL: OPEN SPACE STUDY (REVISED DECEMBER 2010)

5.12 There are nine designated Local Nature Reserves (LNR) sites in Kirklees (six are included within the audit of natural and semi natural greenspaces), including two recently designated sites, Gledholt Woods and Oakwell Hall. In 1996, Natural England recommended that there should be one hectare of designated LNR per 1,000 population. The Council has adopted this target as a standard through its Parks and Open Space Strategy (2003). To put this into local context, with a population of 388,571 (2001 census data), Kirklees should have at least 389 hectares of LNR. However, to date only 84 hectares has been designated, leaving a shortfall of some 305 hectares. The council have identified a number of potential LNR sites, including Beaumont Park woodland area. Even with these sites it is highly unlikely that the council will achieve the LNR target in the foreseeable future. An officer has been appointed within the Countryside Unit to develop and manage LNR sites. The initial focus was getting existing LNRs in order and of an acceptable standard. The following sites are already designated:

- ❑ Dalton Bank, Huddersfield.
- ❑ Upper Park Wood, Honley.
- ❑ Tong Moor, Birkenshaw.
- ❑ Sunny Bank Ponds, Mirfield.
- ❑ Lower Spen, Ravensthorpe.
- ❑ Sparrow Wood, Savile Town, Dewsbury
- ❑ Oakwell Hall Country Park, Birstall.
- ❑ Gledholt Woods, Huddersfield.
- ❑ Dogley, Kirkburton.

5.13 The Kirklees Wildlife and Landscape Advisory Forum have prepared a provisional list of sites for designation as LNRs, including Beaumont Park woodland and Castle Hill. The proposals are strongly supported in principle by Natural England.

5.14 Consultation with local user groups identified potential to create a large swathe of woodlands at Lower Fell Greave Wood, Upper Fell Greave Wood, Bradley Gate Wood, Dyson Wood and Screamer Wood which together cover 65 hectares of land within the Bradley area of Huddersfield. Linking the woodlands by one name would give them more significance and importance.

KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL: OPEN SPACE STUDY (REVISED DECEMBER 2010)

Accessibility

5.15 The effective catchments of semi-nature open spaces has been identified using data from the street survey (see Figure 5.3) and guidance issued by the Greater London Authority (GLA)⁴. The following catchments are used to identify the coverage of current provision:

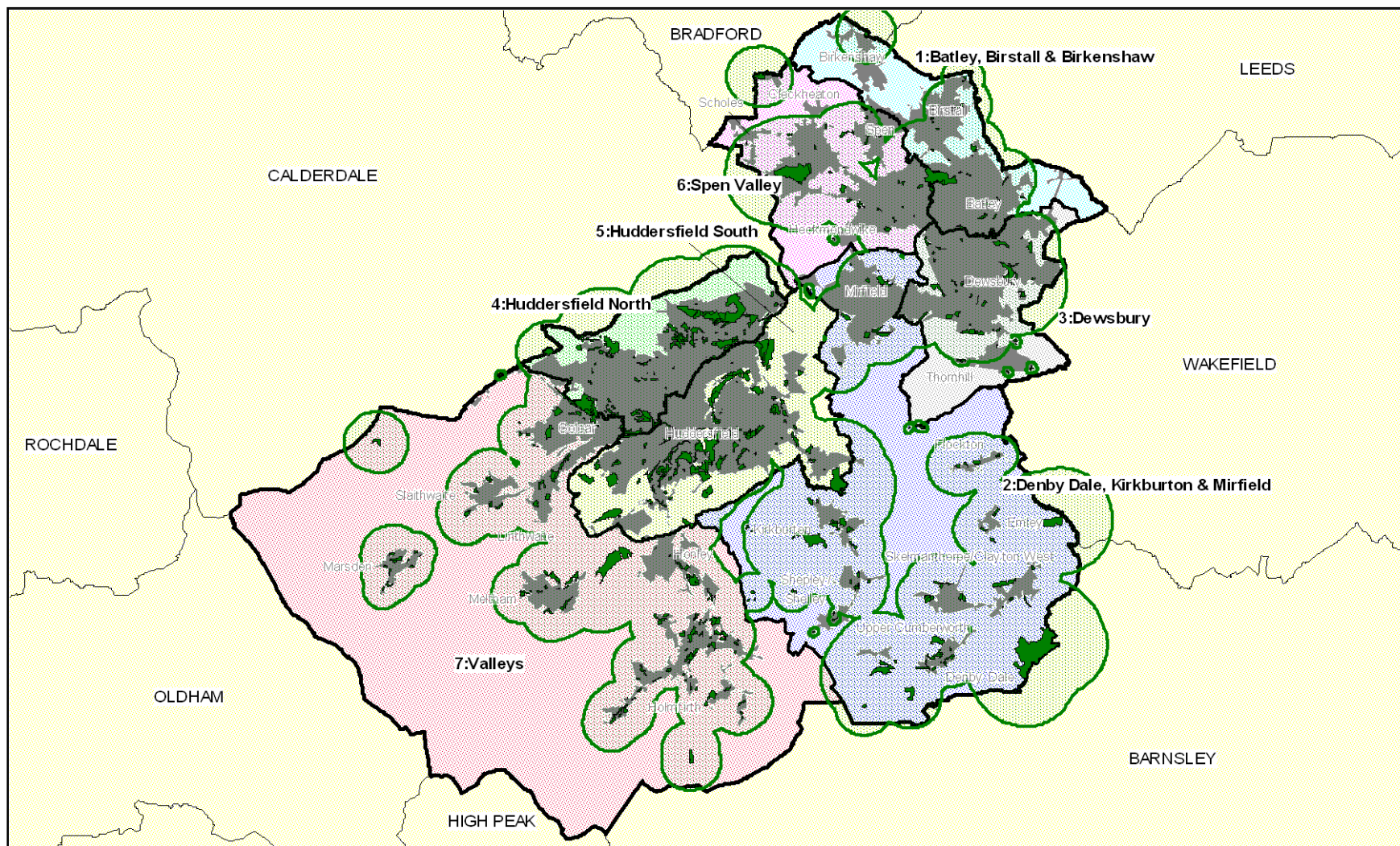
- Borough-wide significance (site more than 10ha) – 1,600 metres.
- Settlement significance (site between 1ha and 10ha) – 900 metres.
- Neighbourhood significance (site between 0.66ha and 1ha) – 600 metres.
- Local significance (site up to 0.66ha) – 120 metres.

⁴ Greater London Authority (2002): Guide to preparing open space strategies



KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL: OPEN SPACE STUDY (REVISED DECEMBER 2010)

Figure 5.8: Natural and semi-natural greenspaces mapped against settlement areas with catchment areas applied



KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL: OPEN SPACE STUDY (REVISED DECEMBER 2010)

Table 5.2: Gaps in provision of natural and semi-natural greenspace

Analysis area	Catchment gaps
Batley, Birstall and Birkenshaw	<input type="checkbox"/> Birkenshaw. <input type="checkbox"/> Minor gap on the outskirts of Birstall.
Denby Dale, Kirkburton & Mirfield	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor gap near to Shelley.
Dewsbury	<input type="checkbox"/> Thornhill.
Huddersfield North	No gaps identified.
Huddersfield South	No gaps identified.
Spenn Valley	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor gap near to Gomersal. <input type="checkbox"/> Minor gap near to Cleckheaton.
Valleys	No gaps identified.

- 5.16 There is good coverage of natural and semi natural greenspaces within the built-up areas across Kirklees, with few catchment gaps. Those listed above are minor catchment gaps and not seen as a priority to fulfil.
- 5.17 Due to the adequate coverage of natural and semi natural greenspace across the District it is important to address accessibility issues. For example, access to woodlands for visitors with physical disabilities is poor. There is a lack of wheelchair suitable paths, which restricts user experience. The only woodland site suitable for wheelchair users is Screamer Wood. However, with the very nature of semi natural sites it is difficult to make everywhere wheelchair accessible. Dalton Bank LNR does have access for people with disabilities from the car park. Deffer Wood has considerable potential for scooters and wheelchairs, as does Cliff Wood Park and Clayton West.
- 5.18 The needs of deaf people, visually impaired and those with restricted mobility also need to be considered, e.g. the removal of step over stiles can make country walks accessible to many more visitors, benches at strategic points can provide opportunities for the elderly to rest and the removal of overhanging branches can make life easier for the partially sighted.
- 5.19 Safety was highlighted during consultation as an inhibiting factor for people accessing sites. Residents do not always feel secure in the countryside. The lack of signage in the countryside further exacerbates users' feelings of insecurity and isolation. The Highways based Public Rights of Way Unit has made improvements to the signage of the rights of way network over the past two to three years.

KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL: OPEN SPACE STUDY (REVISED DECEMBER 2010)

Management

- 5.20 Plans for the management of natural and semi-natural greenspaces include the Kirklees Biodiversity Action Plan 2009 (BAP) and the BAP Strategy 2009 which set out the priorities for managing habitats and species and the Upper Colne Valley Integrated Management Plan (2003) for the moorland and farmed grassland, meadows and pastures. The latter of the two, aims to conserve, promote and enhance the special biodiversity interest of the area through delivery of key targets and objectives. The Kirklees BAP takes on board the UK BAP ideas and has added to them to reflect the Kirklees area, providing a focus for local initiatives and the regional importance of its wildlife.
- 5.21 Approximately a third of the existing tree cover in Kirklees is considered to be ancient woodland. Bradley Gate Wood (44ha) and Honley Old Wood (58ha) provide the biggest contribution to this. Over four fifths (88%) of woodland is in private ownership with many woods having several owners. Some of the companies involved include Woodland Trust, Yorkshire Water and local companies such as Syngenta and Hepworths. The remaining woodlands are in Council ownership and managed primarily for amenity and recreation and also to protect ecological interests.
- 5.22 The large number of privately owned woodlands creates difficulties with disjointed ownership. Consequently, management tends to be poor to non-existent leading to deterioration in woodland quality. In this respect, a major problem is that woodland boundaries are neglected leading to uncontrolled grazing, which restricts natural regeneration.
- 5.23 There are 190 pieces of land identified as woodland (a sub typology of natural and semi natural greenspaces) across Kirklees. Over 30% of these woodland sites have been scored as low quality. This is often due to a lack of sites not scoring on elements such as litterbin, seating and picnic table provision.
- 5.24 In the absence of management agreements for woodlands, the protection and enhancement of the tree stock has relied on the use of tree preservation orders (TPOs), together with initiatives to secure new planting particularly on steep hillsides incapable of other beneficial use, within urban areas and in wooded cloughs.
- 5.25 Consultation supports the need for improved woodland management at privately owned sites specifically. Concerns were expressed about over usage by motorcycles and dog walkers. Management is also regarded as being haphazard and poorly informed in some instances, such as at Moniker Wood, where residents suggest that the owner does not take responsibility for management of the site. There is a need for greater enforcement to be placed on woodland owners to ensure sufficient management procedures.



KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL: OPEN SPACE STUDY (REVISED DECEMBER 2010)

- 5.26 The White Rose Forest (WRF) is a West Yorkshire wide partnership made up of signatories to a Joint Venture Agreement and consists local authorities, government agencies and interested groups. Launched in 2000, it aims to promote tree planting and woodland management throughout West Yorkshire as away of unlocking economic regeneration. Its vision is to 'create a genuinely sustainable well-wooded landscape which will benefit the people, economy and wildlife of West Yorkshire'. For example, between 2000-2003 there were 100 hectares of new woodland planted across 40 projects, totaling over £1million as part of an urban forestry programme. This was targeted to major transport networks, regeneration areas and derelict land.
- 5.27 WRF, with KMC acting as accountable body, draws in external funding so that partners can implement their own projects under the White Rose Forest banner, the many projects in Kirklees include: Huddersfield Ring Road, Extension to Lady Wood at Ravensthorpe, Wholestone Moor, Butterley Reservoir, Pasture Wood, Merrydale and Scammonden Water. These projects were coordinated by the Kirklees Woodland Working party to ensure that each scheme was of a high quality that demonstrated multifunctional forestry by delivering outputs for biodiversity, landscape improvement and public access and education. The projects were approved by the Forestry Commission and senior experts in the fields of biodiversity and conservation have endorsed these projects as exemplars in their own right.
- 5.28 Since January 2005, WRF has been working with the West Yorkshire Economic Partnership to work up a sub-regional programme of Green Infrastructure projects designed to link up green spaces and greenways in and around Yorkshire Forward's priority investment areas, as a way of attracting and retaining investment by producing "quality of place". The work in Kirklees will be concentrated in Marsden and Slaithwaite Renaissance Market Towns and in the South Dewsbury Growth Area. The Kirklees Green Infrastructure Group has been set up to ensure good communication between departments and organisations and will oversee the delivery of these new projects if funding is acquired.

KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL: OPEN SPACE STUDY (REVISED DECEMBER 2010)

Quality

- 5.29 The methodology for assessing quality is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for natural and semi-natural greenspaces in Kirklees. The threshold for assessing low quality is set at 40% and high quality set at 60%; this is based on the Green Flag Award field assessment pass mark, in order to be consistent with KMC's ambition to achieve high quality open spaces nationally. The criteria used in this study to assess natural and semi natural sites are also based on those used in Green Flag field assessments. However, due to the nature of sites falling within this typology e.g. vacant unused land which has been allowed to re-vegetate will not reach Green Flag standards as these do not contain the relevant elements required, the scoring has been weighted to better reflect the typical typology characteristics. Individual site summaries can be found at the end of this section.
- 5.30 Technical corrections to the open space database, coupled with amendments to the criteria and their weightings have resulted in the maximum quality score for natural and semi natural greenspace being reduced by 24 points.
- 5.31 There are 207 pieces of unmanaged natural and semi natural land (unused land with no public access and unused land with public access) in Kirklees. In total 39% of these sites were assessed as low quality and 38% were assessed as high value. This reflects their importance and justification to increase quality and access at some of these sites.

Table 5.3: Quality scores for natural and semi natural greenspaces by analysis area

Analysis area	QUALITY Scores					Threshold		
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	Low	Medium	High
Batley, Birstall & Birkenshaw	75	28%	48%	72%	44%	10	12	7
Denby Dale, Kirkburton & Mirfield	75	24%	56%	77%	53%	6	54	31
Dewsbury	75	23%	45%	68%	45%	15	28	3
Huddersfield North	75	7%	45%	85%	78%	31	58	8
Huddersfield South	75	21%	45%	85%	64%	46	76	9
Spenn Valley	75	32%	54%	75%	43%	5	19	9
Valleys	75	19%	46%	73%	55%	45	90	12
KIRKLEES	75	7%	48%	85%	79%	158	337	79



KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL: OPEN SPACE STUDY (REVISED DECEMBER 2010)

- 5.32 In general sites are assessed as neither particularly low nor particularly high quality. The Denby Dale, Kirkburton & Mirfield analysis area has the highest number of good quality sites.
- 5.33 Woodlands were indicated, during consultation, to be the main semi-natural sites requiring improvements to quality, where sites appear to be overgrown. In particular, Lepton Great Wood, Rowley Lane in Farnley Tyas requires pollarding, thinning out and regeneration. A large number of sites were identified in site assessments as being over grown. Upper Fell Greave Wood was identified both during consultation and site visit to be suffering from fly tipping.
- 5.34 According to consultation, quad bikes and motorbikes are perceived to be a problem across all types of open spaces in Kirklees. Semi-natural sites can be particularly vulnerable due to their general open nature and the rough terrain is often attractive to quad bike/motorbike users. Such use in woodlands results in damage and can deter visitors. However, during site visits only eight sites identified evidence of damage due to motorbike/quad bike use. On a particularly high scale, were the woodland situated north of, Hall Cross Road, Lowerhouses, Huddersfield (632.5) and the unused land at Warrenside Fields (641.3). There is demand from user groups for greater access controls, where possible and without interfering with DDA compliance, to tackle the problem. Options could be explored for the potential to develop an official site for motorbike use, although this would not necessarily resolve all problems, it would make it much easier for the police to take action over offenders.
- 5.35 Installation of commemorative plaques at some sites has instilled greater respect for work, which has been carried out. This has been particularly effective at sites such as Chickenley Ponds. However, vandalism to interpretation signs is becoming more frequent, particularly on sites in the urban fringe.
- 5.36 Consultation with ramblers' highlights that semi-natural sites should have more clearly defined tracks/routes. Some tracks are continually overgrown. For example, the route up to Hook Hill, Marsden requires attention. Ramblers also suggest that many more moorland tracks are in a poor state of repair, particularly on farmland. This can often be due to a lack of security controls, which are often removed or vandalised.

KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL: OPEN SPACE STUDY (REVISED DECEMBER 2010)

Value

- 5.37 The methodology for assessing value is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for natural and semi-natural greenspaces in Kirklees. In total, 576 of the identified sites were assessed for value. One site is identified with a sub typology as school playing field therefore received a school playing field assessment as opposed to an open space assessment. School playing fields have not been assessed for value.
- 5.38 The value threshold set for natural and semi-natural greenspace is lower than those set for other open space typologies. To take account of the varied nature of sites classified as natural and semi-natural, ranging from woodlands to local nature reserves, to wetlands and grasslands, sites are scored against all value criteria. Some of the criteria are more applicable to certain sub-typologies than others, e.g. Local nature reserves are more likely to score for educational benefits than woodlands are. Therefore due to the large proportion of woodland sites in Kirklees, in comparison to other sub typologies of natural and semi natural greenspace, and in order to reflect their varied value to local communities the threshold is reduced. A score of 5% or less is considered to indicate that a site has low value and a score of 8% or more is considered to indicate high value. A list of low value sites and an indication of their position relative to the threshold can be found in Appendix 1.
- 5.39 Revisions to the scoring system have been carried out to reflect technical corrections made in the accompanying open space database. Therefore the maximum value score for natural and semi natural greenspaces has reduced by five points from the 2007 report.

Table 5.5: Value scores for natural and semi-natural greenspaces by analysis area

Analysis area	VALUE Scores					Threshold		
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	Low	Medium	High
Batley, Birstall & Birkenshaw	110	3%	9%	28%	25%	6	12	11
Denby Dale, Kirkburton & Mirfield	110	2%	12%	38%	36%	20	9	62
Dewsbury	110	3%	9%	25%	22%	9	15	22
Huddersfield North	110	1%	13%	45%	45%	18	21	58
Huddersfield South	110	2%	11%	42%	40%	30	33	68
Spenn Valley	110	4%	12%	35%	32%	7	6	20
Valleys	110	2%	10%	25%	24%	48	10	91
KIRKLEES	110	1%	11%	45%	45%	138	106	332



KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL: OPEN SPACE STUDY (REVISED DECEMBER 2010)

5.40 In terms of value, the average score across Kirklees is 11%, ranging from 45% for Bradley Gate Wood to just 1% for a number of small-unused sites. In total, 138 sites fall below the 5% value threshold, representing approximately 31% of natural and semi-natural sites; over half of these are classified as unused land. These low value sites are examined in further detail in Appendix 1. No LNRs are identified as low value, with four assessed as medium value and two as high.

Community involvement

5.41 Kirklees has an active and well established network of community groups working in semi natural sites, such as woodlands and wetlands. Culture and Leisure Services manage the majority of sites with community use. Following successful projects by Kirklees Friends of the Environment, a group working predominately on neglected sites in the Dewsbury area, local resident groups would like to see more disused open spaces developed into wildlife areas and are also keen to become more involved in such projects. This interest is reflected in the high number of initiatives that are currently operating in the District. Some of these require sustainability of funding in order to continue, such as Friends of Slaithwaite Spa.

5.42 Kirklees Friends of the Environment feel that there is general lack of awareness of the existence and potential uses of semi natural sites in Kirklees. Its aspiration is to increase usage of BME groups in semi-natural sites. This is currently being achieved through festivals and events to promote awareness of such sites. There is interest in setting up an Afro-Caribbean community group at Dalton Bank. Caulms Wood, Dewsbury was also cited as an example of where this type of participation could be encouraged further.

5.43 A number of schools have developed outdoor classrooms. For example, Jubilee Garden Committee has developed an outdoor classroom facility at Birdsedge First School, which has the facility of raised beds and fully DDA compliant pathways.

5.44 Courses teaching skills such as drystone walling, hedge laying and conservation techniques are increasingly being offered as a means of educating volunteers and enhancing open spaces. Furthermore, groups are increasingly trying to encourage work with school groups in order to increase young people's ownership of open space sites and raise their environmental awareness.

KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL: OPEN SPACE STUDY (REVISED DECEMBER 2010)

5.45 A good example of a project in Kirkees that has stimulated high community involvement is the Denby Dale Parish Countryside Project. This is a partnership between Denby Dale Parish Council, KMC, Denby Dale Parish Environment Trust and Waste Recycling Environment Network (WREN). The project focus is involving the local community in all environmental matters in Denby Dale Parish, including sustainable planning, countryside access, wildlife conservation and environmental education. Current projects include conserving the Upper Dearne Woodlands as a community resource and promoting its use by local people, management of Turpin Hill SSSI to reverse the decline in habitat and introduce appropriate conservation management and ensuring an access agreement provides security of access to Deffer Woods for local residents.

Site data

5.46 This section presents the site specific key issues drawn from consultation for natural and semi natural greenspaces.

Site	Site ref	Quality score	Value score	Comments
Almondbury Bank, Huddersfield	660.1	60%	39%	Litter is a problem along Bank End Lane.
Dalton Bank Local Nature Reserve, Huddersfield	1315	65%	28%	<p>This site suffers from occasional vandalism, sever fly tipping, litter, dog fouling and graffiti impacting on the visual quality and usage of the site. A local group has shown an interest in establishing a 'friends of' group for this LNR, which would increase on-site presence and deter anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Landfill tax credit has funded construction of a disabled access trail within the LNR. To increase the usage of the site by wheelchair users greater awareness of the facility is required.</p> <p>Consultation highlights that the access road is in a poor condition and requires upgrading to enhance access.</p>

KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL: OPEN SPACE STUDY (REVISED DECEMBER 2010)

Site	Site ref	Quality score	Value score	Comments
Gledholt/TP Woods Local Nature Reserve, Huddersfield	611.1	43%	34%	<p>The 'Friends of' group has worked to increase the biodiversity at the site through planting. It regularly carries out litter picks and is active in maintaining the woodlands.</p> <p>Consultation with the 'friends of' group identified demand to increase the numbers of visitors to the woodland. Associated improvements to the rights of way, which need upgrading and increased signage, are regarded as facilitating this aspiration. The woodland is considered as being particularly poorly signed and only accessible to those members of the community who are aware of it in spite of the woods having potential for wider appeal.</p>
Kilner Bank, Huddersfield	597.2	41%	26%	<p>Visible from Huddersfield Town Centre, this site is a prominent green space. A group of local residents actively carries out enhancement works. This has focused mainly on footpath improvements. A number of paths within the site are now suitable for wheelchair users. There are also plans for construction of a new stepped footpath with a guiding handrail to further improve access to the site.</p> <p>The site provides an access route for children attending schools in Rawthorpe and also for residents visiting the Galpharm Stadium.</p> <p>Due to repeated fire damage plastic benches have been replaced with steel benches. These remain subject to vandalism in the form of graffiti but this is not a major concern.</p>

**KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL:
OPEN SPACE STUDY (REVISED DECEMBER 2010)**

Site	Site ref	Quality score	Value score	Comments
Lower Fell Greave Wood and Bradley Gate Wood, Huddersfield	632.5	43%	27%	Community consultation identified potential to establish an overall vision for the site as an entire entity rather than as small pockets of woodlands. It is felt that this would enhance the overall value of the woodlands
				Concern was expressed about motorbikes accessing the woodlands, particularly during the weekend. Bins and benches have also been vandalised, except where they are in sight of the road. Dumping is also a problem at the site.
Lower Spen Local Nature Reserve, Park Road, Ravensthorpe	1314	44%	31%	Conflict with horse riders is an issue at the site. Negotiations have been conducted to create a path along the south boundary of the woodland. However, horses have returned to using the designated footpath due to its better quality.
				Local interest groups would like the entire area to be developed as a nature reserve to make the whole area more significant and to raise the status of the woodlands.
Paddock Clough, Paddock, Huddersfield	613.1	44%	31%	There is no formal community group, but there is some local interest in establishing one. This site is well used by local residents. However, it has suffered vandalism to the extent that bird hides have had to be removed.
				Work is being carried out by Environmental Alliance as part of 'Transforming Your Space' (see Allotment Section for further details). A ramp is being created to bypass the steps. The clough is very overgrown at present and the tree canopies require lifting
Plane Street, Primrose Hill, Huddersfield	193.1	45%	19%	Work is being carried out by Environmental Alliance as part of 'Transforming Your Space' (see Allotment Section for further details). A ramp is being created to bypass the steps. The clough is very overgrown at present and the tree canopies require lifting
				Newsome Community Forum has obtained Neighbourhood Renewal funding to improve this current wasteland. The intention is to create a more accessible area with seating. There is also potential for the creation of a wildlife area and nature trail.

**KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL:
OPEN SPACE STUDY (REVISED DECEMBER 2010)**

Site	Site ref	Quality score	Value score	Comments
Sparrow Wood Local Nature Reserve, Dewsbury	520.3	49%	25%	Second woodland on an old quarry and new planting (15 years ago).
Sunny Bank Ponds Local Nature Reserve, Mirfield	1316	47%	22%	This small site, managed by Ponds Conservation Trust, is closely surrounded by housing on all sides. Access is limited but this ensures the site remains an important wildlife haven.
Upper Dearne Valley Woodlands	58	55%	33%	Although the site is in private ownership an access agreement with the landowners allows for public access. The conservation group, associated with the site, operates a management plan focusing on habitat conservation, access management and education and information as priorities.
Upper Park Wood Local Nature Reserve, Berry Brow, Huddersfield	1313	60%	42%	Jointly managed with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. Established woodland with new planning in the wider area.

KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL: OPEN SPACE STUDY (REVISED DECEMBER 2010)

5.47 The table below presents natural and semi-natural sites raised during consultation, which were outside the scope of the study, such as some woodlands in the green belt. These sites were subsequently assessed by KKP but are not included in the overall provision of natural and semi-natural greenspaces or used to inform the setting of provision standards. The assessments, however, will be used to inform other council activities.

Site	Site ref	Quality score	Value score	Comments
Caulms Wood, Dewsbury	98.1	32%	25%	Community consultation highlighted potential to develop BME participation in the woodlands.
Dean Wood, Netherton	1321	61%	15%	<p>As upland oak woodland, the site is highlighted as a priority in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Management of the woodland is aimed at maintaining historical and ecological interest and improving visitor experience.</p> <p>Establishing the woodland as an amenity for local people is being undertaken through work by the 'friends of' group. The main work has focused on construction of a hardcore footpath. This has improved access within the site, particularly for local elderly residents who now regularly visit the woods for recreational walking and exercise.</p> <p>Future aspirations for the 'friends' group includes the creation of a pond area and establishment of a circular way marked walk.</p> <p>Consultation identified fly tipping as a sporadic problem affecting the lower section of the wood and adjacent private land. Local users report that this detracts from the overall visual quality of the site.</p>
Honley Old Wood (SSI), Wood Bottom Road, Honley	1323	73%	6%	KMC would like to have more management/control over the site in order to deal with issues, such as regular vandalism and illegal motorbike use, more effectively. Negotiation with the landowner, Johnson Wellfield Quarry, could facilitate this.

KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL: OPEN SPACE STUDY (REVISED DECEMBER 2010)

Site	Site ref	Quality score	Value score	Comments
Land at the back of Lowerhouses Infant and Junior School, Huddersfield	1327	55%	17%	The Environment Alliance, with assistance from Newsome Community Forum, would like to create a pond area at the site. There is also a suggestion of undertaking tree planting within this area in order to establish a more appealing area for local residents.
Land Adjacent Scammonden Reservoir, New Lane, Scammonden	1319	57%	16%	Consultation identified the presence of a number of habitats. With further enhancement such as the creation of a nature trail, the site has potential to be designated as a nature reserve with agreement of the landowner, Yorkshire Water.
Lepton Great Wood, Lepton	1324	65%	18%	This is a very well used local wood. The site is privately owned and suffers from a lack of woodland management.
Myers Wood, Kirkburton	1322	59%	12%	This large woodland is currently owned by Huddersfield University but may soon be transferred to KMC ownership. The site is considered to be of poor quality by local residents, resultant of a perceived absence of woodland management.
Shelley College, Huddersfield Road, Shelley	683.4	57%	42%	Shelley College owns 35 acres of bounded woodland. A joint venture between the College and Burton Environment Group is providing opportunities for students to gain 'hands-on' experience of conservation work within the college grounds. There is a wooded nature trail where students are hoping to lay paving which is DDA compliant and also a large wildlife garden, with twelve community themes, which will be a learning area once complete. The project has received grants from both Denby Dale Parish Council and Kirkburton Parish Council. Burton Environment Group is also working with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust in relation to pool developments on the college site with newt status.

KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL: OPEN SPACE STUDY (REVISED DECEMBER 2010)

Summary

Natural and semi-natural summary

- There are a number of active 'Friends of' groups working in Kirklees woodlands who particularly support work carried out on PROW. Demand identified for increasing BME usage of sites through increased awareness and promotional activities.
- A number of sites have been identified as possessing potential for designation as LNRs. Even though Kirklees is working towards meeting the LNR target it is unlikely that it will be met in the standard in the foreseeable future.
- Sites are generally neither particularly low quality nor particularly high quality. Woodlands in particular were highlighted as the main semi-natural sites requiring improvements.
- There is good coverage of natural and semi natural sites with few catchment gaps. Therefore it is seen as more important to address issues raised during consultation regarding accessibility. For example, disability access which is regarded as poor. However, it is recognised that the very nature of semi natural sites makes it difficult to have full DDA compliance.