



Doncaster Play Parks

Infrastructure Policy

City of Doncaster Council

Final report

Prepared by LUC

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Doncaster Play Parks

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Overview

1.1 The City of Doncaster Council recognises the importance of play to the health, well-being and development of our children and young people. Our green spaces and play parks are a crucial part of the fabric of play, providing facilities that offer the opportunity for children and young people to be active through play. Therefore, the City of Doncaster Council has established a policy to guide the approach to the provision of play parks within Doncaster. It has been informed by extensive consultation with communities across Doncaster, including young people, residents, elected members and council officers.

1.2 This policy for the first time sets out a positive vision to foster healthy communities through good quality play parks that provide opportunities for informal play and enable our children and young people to live healthy active lives, helping us achieve our overarching Mission of 'Thriving People, Places and Planet'.

1.3 The Play Parks Infrastructure Policy:

- Provides an overview of play parks within Doncaster, the extent and type of the current provision, ownership, management and access across the area.
- Tests and proposes an approach to assessing the quality and value of play parks.
- Sets out issues and opportunities in relation to the provision of play parks, including a review of social and health indicators highlighting the 'need' for play parks within Doncaster.
- Sets out an overarching vision, aims and a recommended action plan.

- Sets out the key principles for design and delivery of play parks; setting out what a good play park should aim to offer.

Defining play

‘Play is fundamental to the healthy development and wellbeing of individuals and communities’

1.4 Play is essential for children’s physical and emotional development. It is an innate part of how humans interact with the world and learn about themselves and others. How different individuals play can vary significantly and can therefore be a challenge to define. The Play Work Principles were previously developed by the Play Work Principles Scrutiny Group (2004). They were developed in order to establish a professional and ethical framework for playworkers and play work. Principle one and two help to establish a definition of play:

- All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological, and social necessity, and is fundamental to the healthy development and well-being of individuals and communities.
- Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.

1.5 Similarly, Play England’s Charter for Play defines play – or ‘playing’ as *‘what children and young people do when they follow their own ideas and interests, in their own way, and for their own reasons.’*

1.6 The broad characteristics and behaviours of play are wide and diverse:

- Play is a creative act, sometimes interior (imaginary worlds), sometimes exterior (adventure games in the woods with friends). Play behaviours may

include running, jumping, chasing, 'rules' based games / invented games, play fighting, shouting, role playing, imagination and fantasy, creating and destroying, use of objects and loose parts, risk taking.

- It is important to define play separately from organised activities, groups, clubs, and classes which often have external rules and conditions, which are generally defined by adults.

1.7 Play can be broadly grouped into three main activities and behaviours:

- Imaginative play – healthy brain development
- Physical play – co-ordination, physical strength, fitness, confidence in the body, fine motor skills
- Social play – relationships, compassion, turn taking, looking after others, delayed gratification and other skills in social awareness, understanding and interaction

1.8 Good design of play parks should help facilitate, foster and promote all three types of play.

Scope

1.9 This policy covers the provision of Play Parks within Doncaster. This includes play parks within parks and open spaces, and 'standalone' play parks in other locations (for example integrated within residential housing areas). This document intends to guide the future approach to managing and enhancing existing play parks, but also inform the delivery of new play parks, in the event that new sites are due to be delivered.

1.10 By necessity this policy focuses on the provision of Play Parks and play opportunities within Doncaster's open spaces. However, it should be recognised that play provision can take many forms and may be undertaken by children and young people in a wide variety of settings. The list below provides

examples of other types of play provision that are not considered as part of this policy:

- Supervised play sessions
- Play in schools, play groups etc.
- Adventure play areas
- Formal sports provision for organised use (e.g. club use)
- Soft play centres
- Incidental areas of grass or green space that are not designed or designated play parks. Although the potential supporting role and benefits of incorporating natural and informal play areas as part of equipped play parks is considered.

1.11 For the purposes of this policy, the following terminology has been used:

- Play park – Play equipment which is publicly accessible
- Teenage provision – Equipment designed to provide social or active spaces for teenagers and young people, for example a MUGA, skate park or teen shelter.
- Park – a publicly accessible open space which contains at least one play park or type of teenage provision.
- Open space – Publicly accessible space which does not contain specific equipment to encourage child or teenage play.

Methodology

1.12 The development of the policy comprised the following key steps:

Understanding where we are now

1. **Understanding the local context.** A desk review was undertaken to understand the key policies and strategic context that relate to the management and planning of play parks. This included developing an understanding of population context, deprivation, health and other drivers to help set out the need for high quality play in Doncaster.
2. **Audit of play parks and access mapping.** Categorising and mapping play parks that have been identified. This included mapping accessibility catchments for different types of play, to identify areas that are not within reasonable distance to play park facilities.
3. **Quality and value assessment.** Testing and developing an approach to play park assessment through a sample site audit of 18 parks.

Understanding where we want to be

4. **Consultation and engagement.** A series of engagement activities was undertaken, this included an online survey aimed at children and young people; a self-led exercise / activity around play undertaken with several primary schools; an online survey for parish councils; and focused interviews with council officers, councillors and service area directors. An in person consultation event was undertaken to gather views on play park enhancement plans for Conisbrough Recreation Ground.
5. **Developing a Vision and Aims** – informed by the engagement exercises and previous steps.

Setting out how we will get there

6. **‘Design and Delivery Principles’** have been set out which will guide ‘how’ new play space and enhancements should be delivered and ‘what’ good quality play space should look like in Doncaster (taking account of issues and opportunities that have been identified). These principles can be used as a form of checklist when developing or reviewing play park proposals. A Strategic Action Plan sets out the next steps for delivering the policy and achieving the vision and aims.

Benefits of play

1.13 There is a wide range of research and evidence that demonstrates how essential play is to the lives and development of children and young people. However, many play advocates and campaign groups highlight the lack of consideration for play and its importance within public policy.

‘Discussion of play has been consistently undervalued in public policy for children, which tends to focus on children’s development into adulthood while overlooking the importance of the physical, social, cultural and emotional worlds that children both inhabit and create in their daily lives.’ (Play England - Play for Change)

1.14 Evidence [\[See reference 1\]](#) & [\[See reference 2\]](#) increasingly recognises the key benefits of play with regard to children’s physical, mental and emotional health, wellbeing and development.

Play encourages physical activity:

- Active play is the most common form of physical activity for children outside of school. Children generally get more exercise from play than from time spent at clubs and organised activities.

- Children who walk and play tend to have greater levels of activity in other areas of their lives.
- There is some evidence that children who are physically active are more likely to adopt healthy lifestyles as they grow up.
- Aspects of physically active play most enjoyed by children include choice, fun, friends, achievement and the possibilities of competition.

Play supports healthy physical development

From an early age, play can help to develop:

- Strong bones
- Muscle strength
- Lung capacity
- Sophisticated physical skills and co-ordinated movements

Play supports cognitive development

From an early age, play can help:

- Language skills
- Problem solving skills
- Gaining perspective
- Memory and creativity

Play is beneficial for children's mental health and emotional well-being:

- Play allows children to express themselves and explore feelings in a safe environment.

- Exploring confusing or painful feelings and sense of self can influence the ability to cope with stress.
- Play helps build resilience through supporting the development and understanding of relationships and experiencing positive feelings and reactions.
- Excitement and anxiety linked to trying new things can help to develop ways of reacting to other unknown situations.
- Imaginative play in particular contributes to children developing emotional wellbeing, self control, control of fear and anxiety, sensitivity and empathy.
- Play helps to develop adaptive systems and links between the brain, the body and the social environment. Playing is an important factor in developing regions of the brain related to emotion, motivation and reward.

Play is beneficial for children's social development:

- Play is often a social experience, shared with others. Children create and establish friendships through play.
- Free play with others helps children learn to see things from different points of view through co-operating, sharing, helping and problem solving.
- For children with disabilities at specialist schools, opportunities to make friends locally through play can be particularly important.
- Relationships can be strengthened through play, potentially using their own language, rules and values helping form social bonds and acceptance by other children.
- Elements of play supporting social development include turn taking, collaboration, following rules, empathy, self-regulation, impulse control and motivation.

Contact with nature and outdoor play is beneficial because:

- It has been associated with children's ability to concentrate and be self-disciplined.

- It can help children gather information and understand their environment.
- It can help the development of spatial skills and sense of direction.
- Increases opportunities to experience the full range of senses including smell, touch, taste and sensation of motion through space.
- Spending time in more natural environments may reduce anxiety, develop sense of self-worth and alleviate symptoms of ADHD.

Structure of the report

1.15 The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** sets out the strategic context and policy drivers for the policy. This section provides a review of relevant international, national and local policies and strategies and key considerations for Doncaster.
- **Chapter 3** sets out the importance and need for play park provision in Doncaster. This includes a summary of population, health and wellbeing characteristics of the area and a summary of community insight and engagement relating to play parks.
- **Chapter 4** provides an overview of the type and amount of play within Doncaster and where it is located and how play parks are currently managed.
- **Chapter 5** sets out the approach to assessing the quality and value of play parks, and the results of a sample audit of play parks in Doncaster.
- **Chapter 6** provides an analysis of access to play across Doncaster, both indicating areas with poor access to play parks, but also areas with good access to multiple play parks.
- **Chapter 7** sets out how the policy will be delivered. This includes:
 - A Vision for play parks in Doncaster
 - Key Aims of the Policy
 - A Strategic Action Plan

Chapter 1 Introduction

- Design and Delivery Principles

Chapter 2

Strategic context and policy drivers

International

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

2.1 Coming into force in the UK in 1992, the Convention acts as a statement of children rights, covering civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to. All rights within the convention are linked with no right being considered more important than the other. However, an article of particular relevance is that of Article 31: Leisure, play and culture. The article states:

- 1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
- 2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.

National

25 year environment plan

2.2 The government's 25 year plan to improve the environment adopts a natural capital approach, with a goal for the government to improve the environment within a generation. This plan sets out ten goals and six key areas to achieve

this overarching vision. The following goals and actions of relevance to the policy include:

- Goal 6: Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment
- Chapter 3: Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing.

2.3 The approach to helping people improve their health and wellbeing by using green spaces is centred on the need to improve connections between people and the environment. A key consideration is encouraging children to be close to the natural environment. Focus is also given to the role of green spaces as a mechanism to combat mental health illness, as an educational tool or as inter-generational social space.

National Planning Policy Framework

2.4 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for development can be produced. Key relevant chapters include:

- 2. Achieving sustainable development
- 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities
- 12. Achieving well-designed places

2.5 In summary, these chapters of the Framework seek to ensure that developments support the provision of safe, accessible green and public spaces that support communities' health and social wellbeing, both now and in the future. Consideration should be given to the availability of opportunities for sport and physical activity due to their importance to health and wellbeing. Consideration is also given to the role open space and recreation in addressing climate change via the delivery of wider benefits for nature.

2.6 NPPF Paragraph 99 sets out the only circumstances in which open space can be developed for different uses. It clarifies that existing open space should not be built on unless:

- An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space to be surplus to requirements; or
- The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

2.7 The NPPF provides a mechanism by which local authorities can protect some open spaces through 'Local Green Space' designations (Paragraph 101). These areas should be managed by policies which are consistent with those for Green Belt.

2.8 Planning Practice Guidance provides further detail on the development and implementation of policies within the NPPF. Guidance of most relevance includes:

- Guidance for open space, sport and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space.
- Planning Practice Guidance 'Natural environment'.

Local

Doncaster Delivering Together (DDT) 2020-30

2.9 Launched by City of Doncaster Council (CDC) in September 2021, DDT forms the central vision for growth within Doncaster. The scheme sets out a 10 year plan, detailing the overarching approach to delivering improvements in the City. The scheme adopts a collective partnership model between local public,

private, voluntary and community sectors in order to deliver a number of community focused aspirations. The approach is centred around the fulfilment of six key Wellbeing Goals; 'The Wellbeing Wheel'. Together the Goals contribute to one overall Mission – Thriving People, Places and Planet:

- Greener and Cleaner
- Skilled and creative
- Healthy and Compassionate
- Safe and Resilient
- Prosperous and Connected
- Fair and Inclusive

2.10 To achieve the Wellbeing Goals a set of eight Priorities have been set out:

- Tackling climate change
- Developing the skills to thrive in life and work
- Making Doncaster the best place to do business and create good jobs
- Building opportunities for healthier, happier and longer lives for all
- Creating safer, stronger, greener and cleaner communities where everyone belongs
- Nurturing a child and family friendly City
- Building transport and digital connections fit for the future
- Promoting Doncaster and its cultural, sporting and heritage opportunities

2.11 The following provides an overview of how the play parks infrastructure policy can help to achieve Doncaster's Wellbeing Goals.

- **Greener and cleaner – Doncaster Play Parks Infrastructure Policy can support and promote:**
 - Appropriate choice of materials for play equipment
 - Opportunities for tree planting as part of play enhancements

- Foster a sense of awareness of natural environment through nature play and access to nature.
- Ensure the play offer can be maintained to a high standard.
- **Fair and inclusive – Doncaster Play Parks Infrastructure Policy can support and promote:**
 - Access for all.
 - Play provision for the diverse needs of the area and to maximise opportunities for different children to meet and play.
 - Play enhancements where they are most needed.
- **Prosperous and connected – Doncaster Play Parks Infrastructure Policy can support and promote:**
 - Locating new play and play enhancements to create local destinations spaces alongside other community facilities.
 - Active travel to play parks and work to improve safe routes for children and young people.
 - The development of destination spaces the local community wants to visit.
- **Safe and resilient – Doncaster Play Parks Infrastructure Policy can support and promote:**
 - Good design to reduce the likelihood of antisocial behaviour.
 - Parks, open spaces and play parks that feel safe and are welcoming.
 - Activation of spaces and encourage use by a wide range of groups (e.g. young and old, teenagers, parents and carers)
- **Healthy and compassionate – Doncaster Play Parks Infrastructure Policy can support and promote:**
 - Recognition of play as part of a healthy, active lifestyles to the improve the physical health of children and young people.
 - Play parks where children of different ages and abilities are able to play together.

■ **Skilled and creative – Doncaster Play Parks Infrastructure Policy can support and promote:**

- The importance of play to healthy cognitive development and to maintain wellbeing.
- Play parks that provide challenge for children and facilitate imaginative play.

Doncaster Local Plan

2.12 Adopted in September 2021, City of Doncaster Council’s Local Plan sets out policies and proposals to meet Doncaster’s needs for housing, employment and development: how much is required, where it should go and when it should happen. Policies of relevance include:

- Policy 10: Residential Policy Areas
- Policy 26: Green Infrastructure
- Policy 27: Protecting Open Space and Non Designated Open Space
- Policy 28: Open Space Provision in New Developments
- Policy 50: Health

2.13 Policy 28 provides standards for the quantity of open space which is required as part of new development and where on-site provision or a commuted sum for off-site provision will likely apply. Where on-site provision is required the policy states the nature and type of open space will have regard for the Council’s Green Space Audit and Playing Pitch Strategy.

2.14 Supporting information to the policy sets out that when new open space is required:

- In areas that need children’s play space this provision will be the highest priority.

- On smaller development proposals the emphasis may wholly be on the provision of children's play space.
- On larger applications, where green space provision will equate to 0.4ha or more, the type of open space to be provided should include children's play space in the first instance, with the remainder taking the form of other sport and green infrastructure depending on the type of identified need in the area.
- Very large developments could consider open space provision such as a public park with integrated children's play.

2.15 Policy 28 details that proposals for new or improved play space (including new equipment) should:

- Have regard for the Fields in Trust Guidance [\[See reference 3\]](#) (The policy summarises Fields in Trust Play Area requirements).
- Ensure children's play areas and open spaces are safe, clearly observed, accessible.
- Meet the communities needs and do not lead to further nuisance, and
- Incorporate robust and durable equipment.

2.16 Supporting information clarifies that equipment will not be considered for adoption by the council if it is considered to incur excessive maintenance and management costs or is deemed unsuitable for the community. Play areas are also required to be accompanied by Risk Benefit Analysis (HSE Children's Play and Leisure – promoting a balanced approach).

Neighbourhood plans

2.17 Neighbourhood Plans have been developed by several communities across Doncaster to help direct the future development of their neighbourhood, parish or town. The communities listed below have made the decision to develop a Neighbourhood Plan:

- Auckley
- Bawtry
- Burghwallis
- Edenthorpe
- Edlington
- Rossington
- Sprotbrough
- Stainforth
- Thorne and Moorends
- Tickhill

2.18 Several neighbourhood plans acknowledge the importance of the play spaces within their community and detail their location within the catchment. Planning for play will likely be most effective at the Parish and ward community level. Specific community needs will likely need to be identified at this scale to ensure that each local area has easy access to good quality opportunities for play. It should be noted that many Parish Councils also own and manage play parks.

Community Investment Masterplans

2.19 Commissioned in Spring 2021 and completed in April 2022 a first round of Community Investment Masterplans (CIMs) have been produced, covering the communities of Edlington, Rossington and Thorne-Moorends. The primary focus of the CIMs is to improve public spaces and key buildings within each community. The CIMs identify several opportunities and issues regarding play, including:

- Edlington: Opportunities for enhancement to play facilities at Edlington Recreational Ground, Yorkshire Main Miners Welfare Ground, and Hill Top Park

- Rossington: An under-provision of play facilities within the parish with existing play areas being poorly maintained and difficult to access via foot.
- Thorne-Moorends: Poorly connected play space near Darlington Grove, and opportunity for play facilities at the Miners Welfare grounds.

Get Doncaster Moving Strategy

2.20 GDM is a strategic framework arising from the previous Doncaster Growing Together Strategy prior to DDT. It sets out the vision for physical activity and sport across Doncaster. The strategy, which runs from 2017-2030, is managed by the GDM Programme Board and will be delivered by the GDM Network, a collaboration of existing organizations and individuals. GDM takes a whole city approach, with more focused work directed at the following groups:

- Those that are physically inactive (undertaking less than 30 minutes of physical activity per week)
- Families with children and young people
- People living in income deprivation including low income or precarious work

2.21 The document highlights the need to tackle inactivity within Doncaster, with approximately a third of residents in Doncaster achieving less than 30 minutes of moderate physical activity per week. However, the document emphasizes that this figure is not spread equally throughout the population of Doncaster, with inactivity more likely in those with higher levels of inequality and deprivation.

2.22 The strategy emphasizes the need to integrate sport and physical activity into daily routines and focuses on eight key policy themes. Particular policies of relevance include:

- Active Environments, Park and Facilities – everyone in Doncaster can enjoy being active in local places and spaces. The natural and built

environment will be safe, accessible and inclusive for local people. We must provide the right environment if we want people to be active.

- Health and Care – physical activity will play a major role within health and care systems – through policy, process and practice – so that everyone in Doncaster can enjoy more healthy years of life.

2.23 Get Doncaster Moving highlights the need for a shared mission to tackle inequalities in physical activity through ‘place-based whole system’ working. This recognises that the Get Doncaster Moving initiative operates within a multi-layered system of policy and practice, some of which is beyond the sphere of influence. The ‘whole system’ encompasses everyone and everything that both influences physical activity and is influenced by physical activity – across layers of the system at an individual, community and organisational level. ‘Place-based whole systems’ approach means:

- Recognising that local communities are best placed to understand what works for them and to learn by doing. Working in a place is not necessarily place-based working.
- A community centred and culturally sensitive approach, which identifies and builds on local strengths and histories, enabling residents to see ‘people like me’ being active.
- Working across the layers of the system at an individual, community, and organisational level to influence systemic change.
- Recognising that importance of understanding and connecting the whole system that influences people’s capability, opportunity and motivation to be physically active (and play sport) – whilst not allowing its complexity to hinder progress.

Doncaster Future Parks program

2.24 The DFP strategy provides an evaluation of the parks and open spaces within Doncaster and seeks to improve their provision with an emphasis on addressing physical activity whilst also benefitting the environment. The strategy contains bespoke park plans and health and wellbeing proposals with a

prioritization of sensitive urban environments or 'hard to reach' communities to promote inclusivity. The strategy oversees the goals and aspirations of fifteen parks and open spaces in Doncaster, and functions as an overarching framework for their management.

2.25 Primary aims of the overarching strategy include:

- Promote awareness of parks and open spaces
- Encourage volunteer participation
- Enhance opportunities for public enjoyment of parks and green spaces
- Deliver communication and marketing activity for parks
- Promote partnership working
- Reinvigorate the Doncaster Green Space Network

Doncaster Playing Pitch Strategy

2.26 Covering the period 2018-2033, the strategic document considers solutions to issues identified within Doncaster's Playing Pitch Assessment Report (in references) relating to the adequacy of provision for football, cricket, rugby league / union, hockey and bowls across the area. The report seeks to address the issues identified and sets out the priorities for the future delivery of facilities for these sports, including the requirement to consider future population growth.

2.27 The three primary objectives of the report are: Protect, Enhance, and Provide playing pitches within Doncaster. Key issues/opportunities identified relate to the quality and maintenance of existing facilities, capacity issues, availability of facilities, protection of existing facilities, and opportunities to enhance community usage and participation.

Doncaster Green Infrastructure Strategy 2014-2028

2.28 Covering the period 2014-2028, the document provides integrated strategies and policies (local and national) as well as an overarching vision for the existing and potential green and open spaces within Doncaster. The vision for the strategy is 'By 2028, Doncaster will have developed an integrated and multifunctional network of high quality green corridors and spaces across the borough, which is well-managed, well-maintained, and well-connected to the wider network.'

2.29 The five primary aims of the strategy include:

- Aim 1: Provide an attractive setting for investment and a place where the workforce wants to live;
- Aim 2: Improving the workforce's health & wellbeing (provide opportunities for physical activity, outdoor learning and contact with the natural environment to combat stress and lifestyle related illness);
- Aim 3: Provide opportunities to diversify the economy and develop jobs in conservation, green industries (e.g. Low Carbon Industries), leisure/tourism and the third sector, with associated opportunities for training and volunteering (which can increase young people's self-respect and aspirations);
- Aim 4: Contribute to halting and reversing the decline of the country's biodiversity and geodiversity; and,
- Aim 5: Improve resilience to the impacts of climate change (e.g. providing urban cooling and reducing flood risk).

2.30 The document goes on to highlight the importance of different scales and types of GI based on five themes: biodiversity & geodiversity; trees and woodland; green spaces; green routes; and historic environment. The strategy also identifies opportunities to increase the amount and quality of informal children's play space and children's play equipment within the central and eastern areas of Doncaster.

Key Considerations: Strategic Context and Policy Drivers:

- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) recognises and highlights the rights of children to engage in play, recreation and leisure. Play has such significance in the lives of children it is specifically recognised within the UNCRC; setting out the importance of understanding children's views and opinions and considering their future life prospects.
- Whilst national planning policies for England do not provide specific detail on the provision of play opportunities for children, there is recognition of the importance of access to green space and the natural environment for the health and wellbeing of communities. Furthermore, national planning policy provides mechanisms to protect some types of public open space and requires that local planning policies and decisions are based on to date assessments of open space, sport and recreation provision and need.
- Doncaster has existing frameworks and programmes of activity which aim to maximise the health and wellbeing benefits which may be derived from parks and open spaces (e.g. Doncaster Future Parks). Doncaster has several planning policies which set out requirements for play provision as part of new development. However, there is no existing overarching strategic, co-ordinated approach to the management, enhancement, and investment in, play park provision over the long term.

Chapter 3

Understanding the need for play provision in Doncaster

Population

3.1 Doncaster covers around 226 square miles. Office for National Statistics mid-year 2021 population data estimates the population of Doncaster to be 308,705. The size of the population grew by around 1.9%, from 2011 up to 2021. This is lower than the overall increase for England (6.6%) and Yorkshire and The Humber (3.7%).

3.2 A large proportion of Doncaster is occupied with agricultural use; therefore population density varies significantly across the area from around 40 people per km² to around 9,500 people per km². The average population density in Doncaster is 542 people per km² compared to 434 across England [See reference 4]. Areas with the highest population densities are generally in the centre of Doncaster, notably around Balby, Hexthorpe, Wheatley and Intake. High population densities are also found within Mexborough and parts of the dispersed settlements, including Askern, Hatfield and New Rossington.

3.3 Children (0-18) are estimated to make up around 22% of the population on average (67,294). The child population of Doncaster (as a percentage of the population) is the same as the average for England as a whole. [See reference 5]

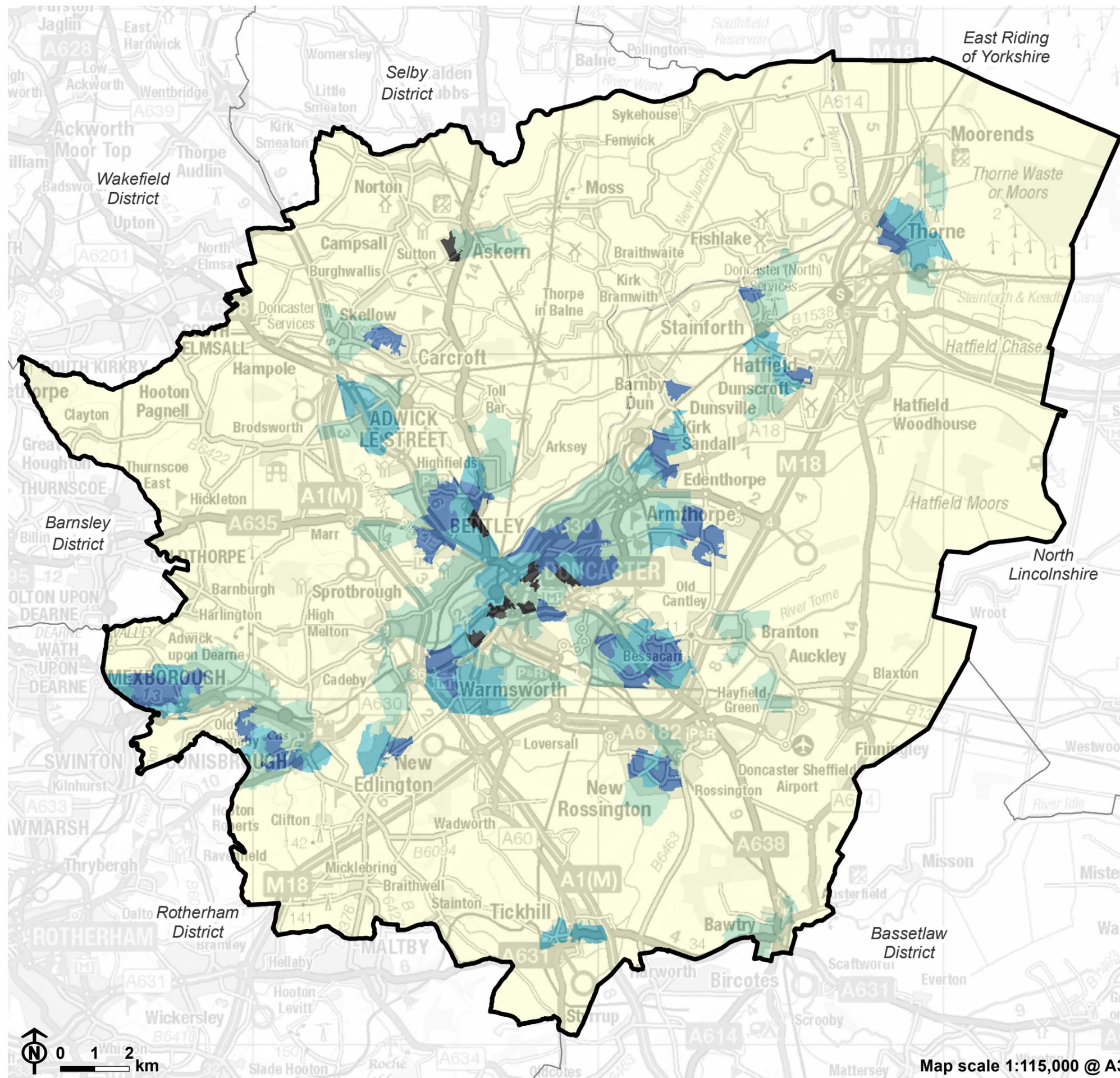
- **0-5 years:** 20,410 children (approx. 7% of Doncaster population)
- **6 to 11 years:** 22, 155 (approx. 7% of Doncaster population)
- **12-18 years:** 24, 729 (approx. 8% of Doncaster population)

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3.4 Areas with the highest percentage child population include locations around Askern, Adwick le Street, east of Bentley, Wheatley Park, Intake, Hyde Park, New Edlington, New Rossington, Hayfield Green, Dunscroft, and Moorends / Thorne south.

3.5 Population density (persons per square kilometre) and child population percentage (by area across Doncaster) can be used to highlight areas where pressure and demand for children's play space may be greater. But should be cross referenced with play space and accessibility data.

Figure 3.1: Population density

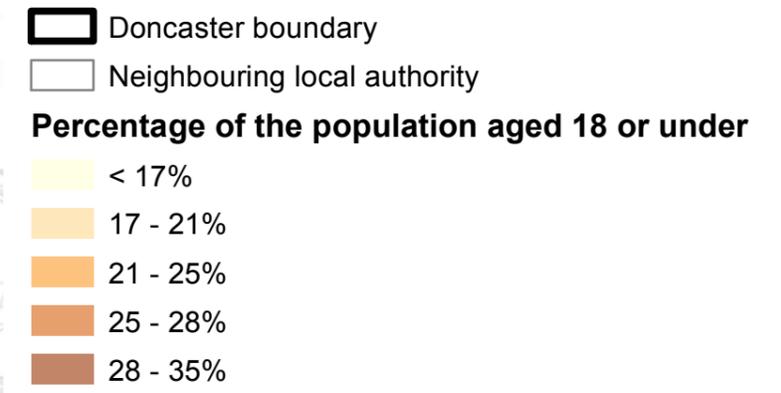
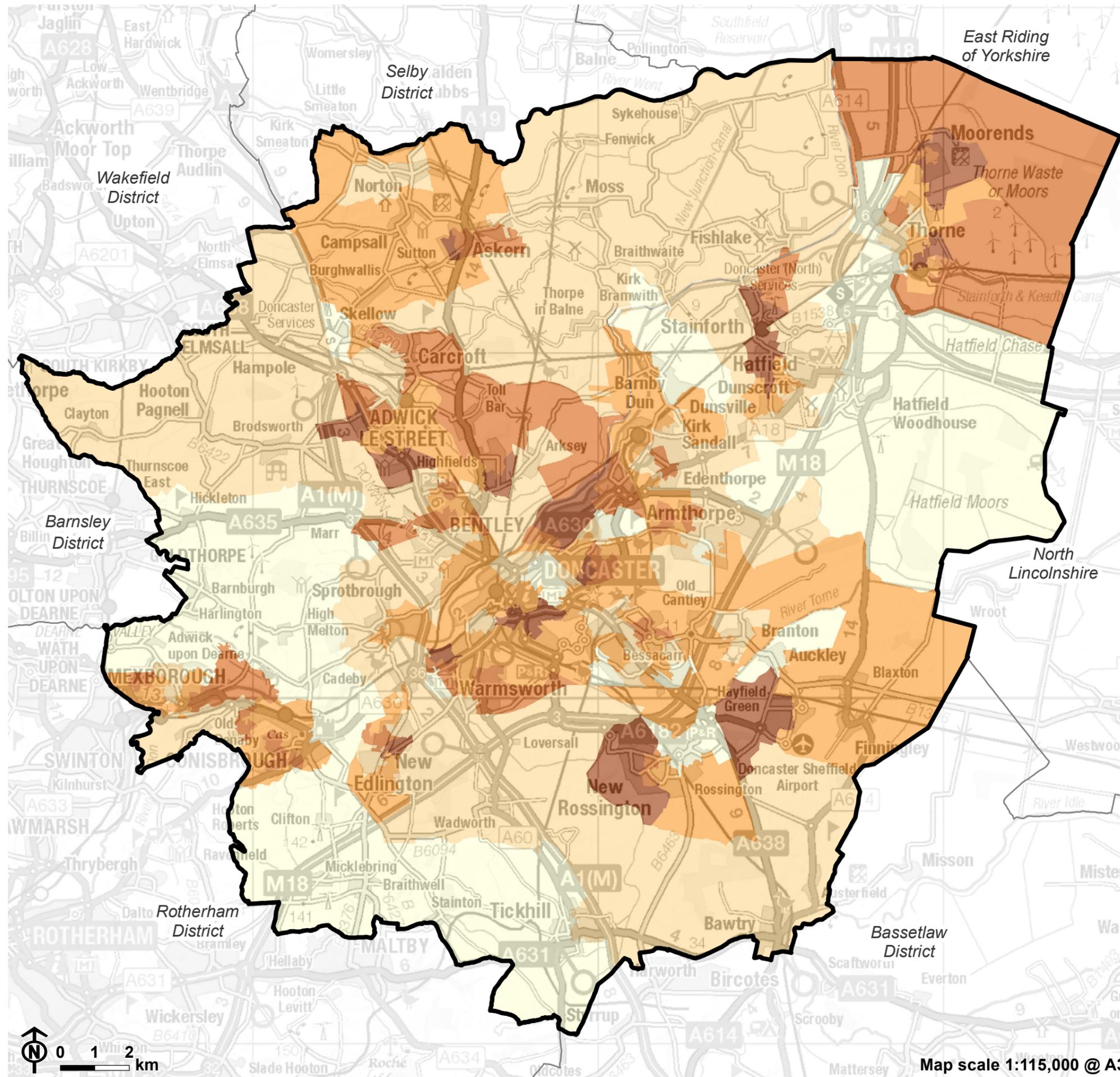


- Doncaster boundary
- Neighbouring local authority
- Population density (population/sqkm)**
 - 38 - 1064
 - 1064 - 2395
 - 2395 - 3938
 - 3938 - 6346
 - 6346 - 11670



Map scale 1:115,000 @ A3

Figure 3.2: Child population



Map scale 1:115,000 @ A3

Deprivation and health

Deprivation and health indicators

3.6 Doncaster performs worse on several health, wellbeing and deprivation indicators when compared to the wider region and England as a whole.

3.7 The Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 provides a set of relative measures of deprivation for small geographic neighbourhood areas (Lower-layer Super Output Areas or 'LSOAs') across England. The IMD are based on seven domains of deprivation including 'Income', 'Employment', 'Education, Skills and Training', 'Health and Disability', 'Crime', 'Barriers to Housing and Services' and 'living Environment'.

3.8 The 2019 IMD indicates that Doncaster ranks as the 41st most deprived area (out of 317) in England. A notable proportion of LSOAs within Doncaster are included in the most deprived 10% nationally (IMD Decile 1) (see **Figure 3.3**). Doncaster is ranked 32 in England (out of 317) in terms of the proportion of LSOAs in the first decile. Areas with highest levels of deprivation (within the 10% most deprived areas) include the centre of Doncaster from around Willow Bridge to Balby, Wheatley Park, Toll Bar, Highfields, Carcroft / Skellow, areas of Conisborough & Mexborough, New Rossington, south of Cantley, Askern, Stainforth.

3.9 **Figure 3.4** shows the deprivation in Doncaster according to the health domain. A fifth of LSOAs in Doncaster are within the most 10% nationally and a further 25% are within the 10 – 20% most deprived. Less than 10% of the LSOAs in Doncaster are within the least deprived 50% nationally. The most deprived areas according to the health domain include Mexborough, Denaby, Stainforth, parts of Adwick-le-Street, Hatfield Moos, New Rossington, Hexthorpe and Blaby.

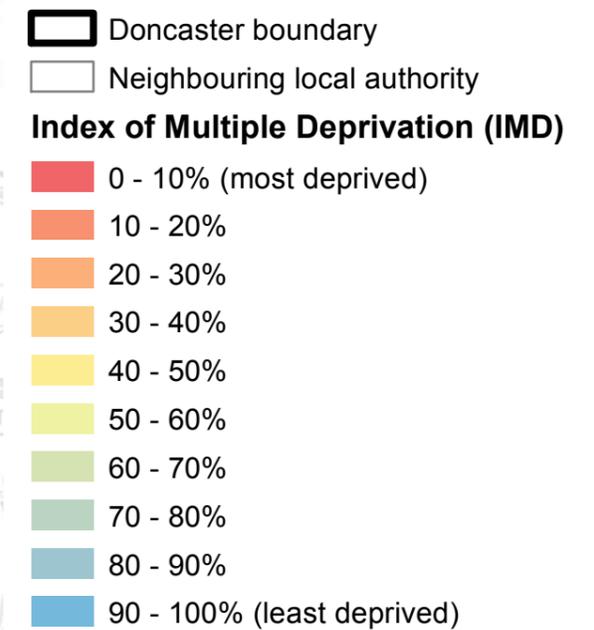
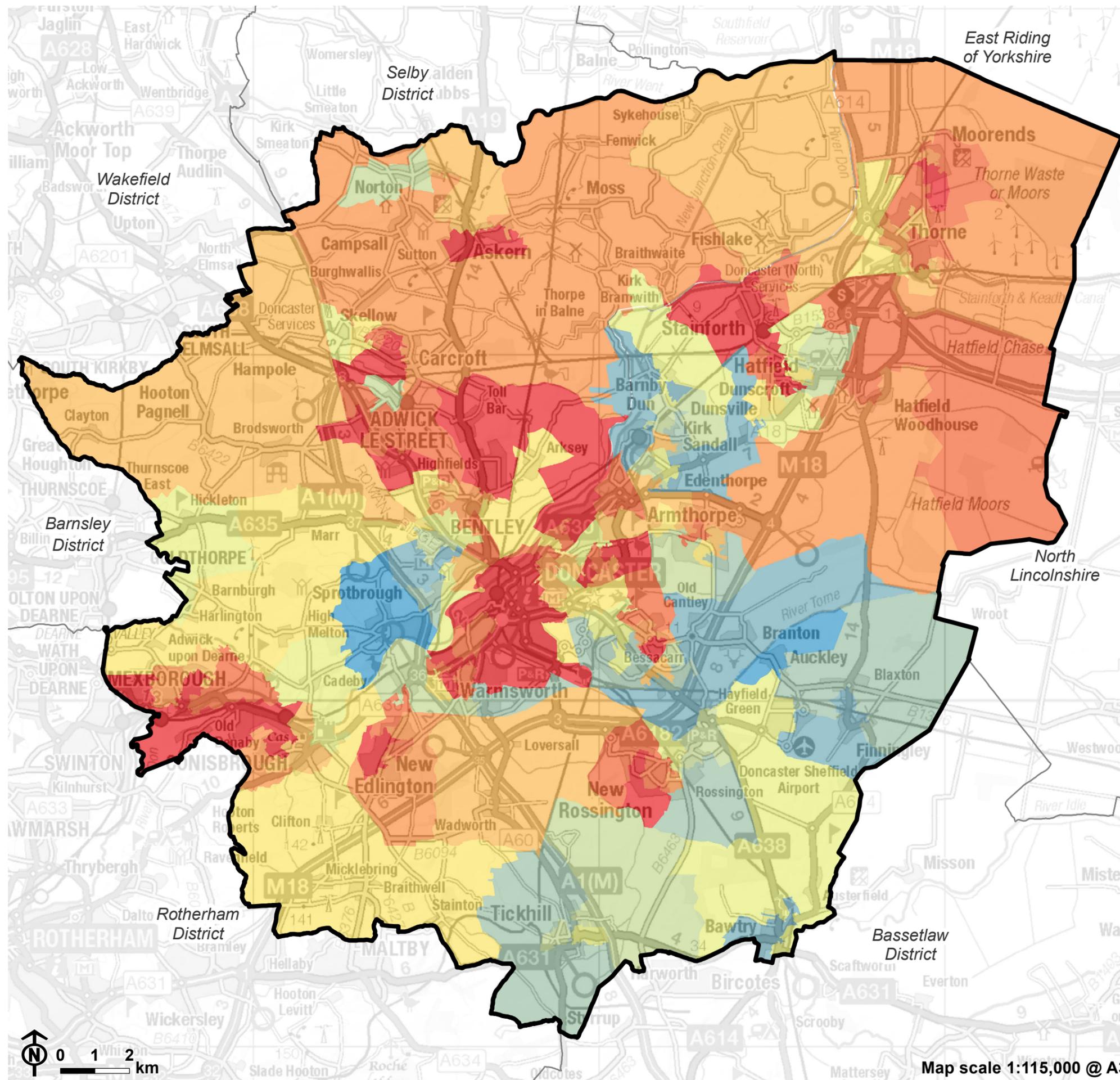
3.10 Living environment deprivation is generally lower in Doncaster than health deprivation (see **Figure 3.5**). Less than 20% of LSOAs are in the most deprived 50% nationally and nearly half of LSOAs in Doncaster are within the 8th and 9th deciles (accounting for the least 70 – 90% deprived LSOAs in England). These are mostly more rural LSOAs in the north, between Askern, Carcroft and Stainforth, as well as the very centre of Doncaster.

3.11 Income deprivation affecting children is shown in **Figure 3.6**. Over 20% of LSOAs are in the most 10% deprived nationally. More deprived areas within this domain include Denaby and Mexborough, Moorends, Bessacarr, Hexthorpe, Balby, Bentley and Adwick-le-Street.

3.12 Quality of life varies significantly across the city. Life expectancy for both men and women is lower than the England average. Variation in life expectancy from the least to most deprived areas in Doncaster is 10 years (male) and 8.2 years (female). Many other health measures for adults are significantly worse than the England average including under 75 mortality rate from all causes, mortality rate from all cardiovascular diseases, mortality rate from cancer and suicide.

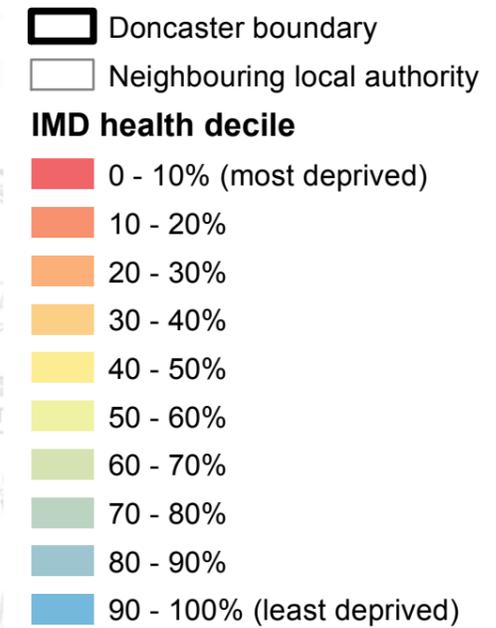
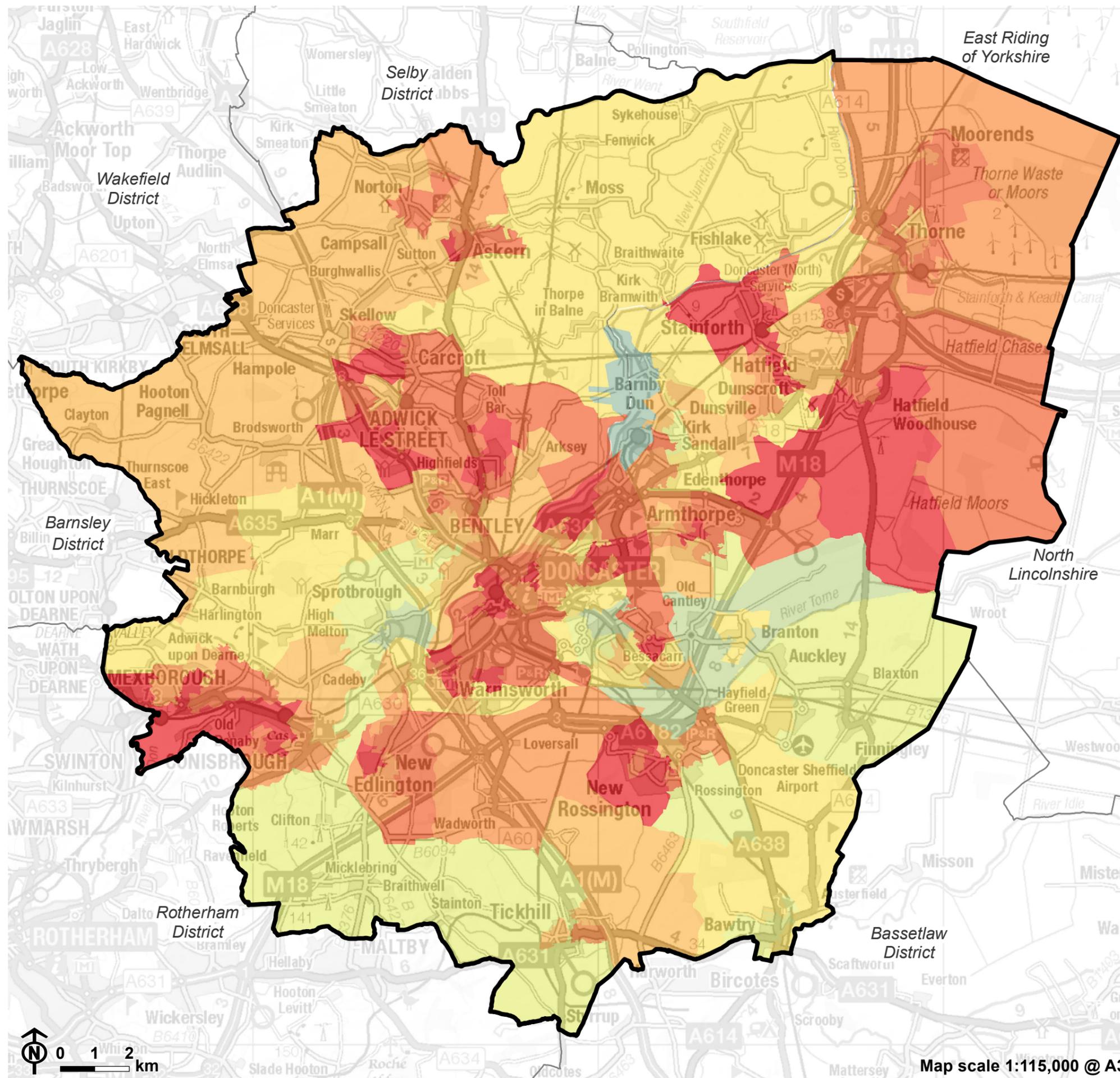
3.13 In year 6, 20.6% of primary age children are classified as obese, which is not significantly different to the England average (20.2%). 22.6% of children in Doncaster live in low-income families. **[See reference 6]**

Figure 3.3: Indices of Multiple Deprivation



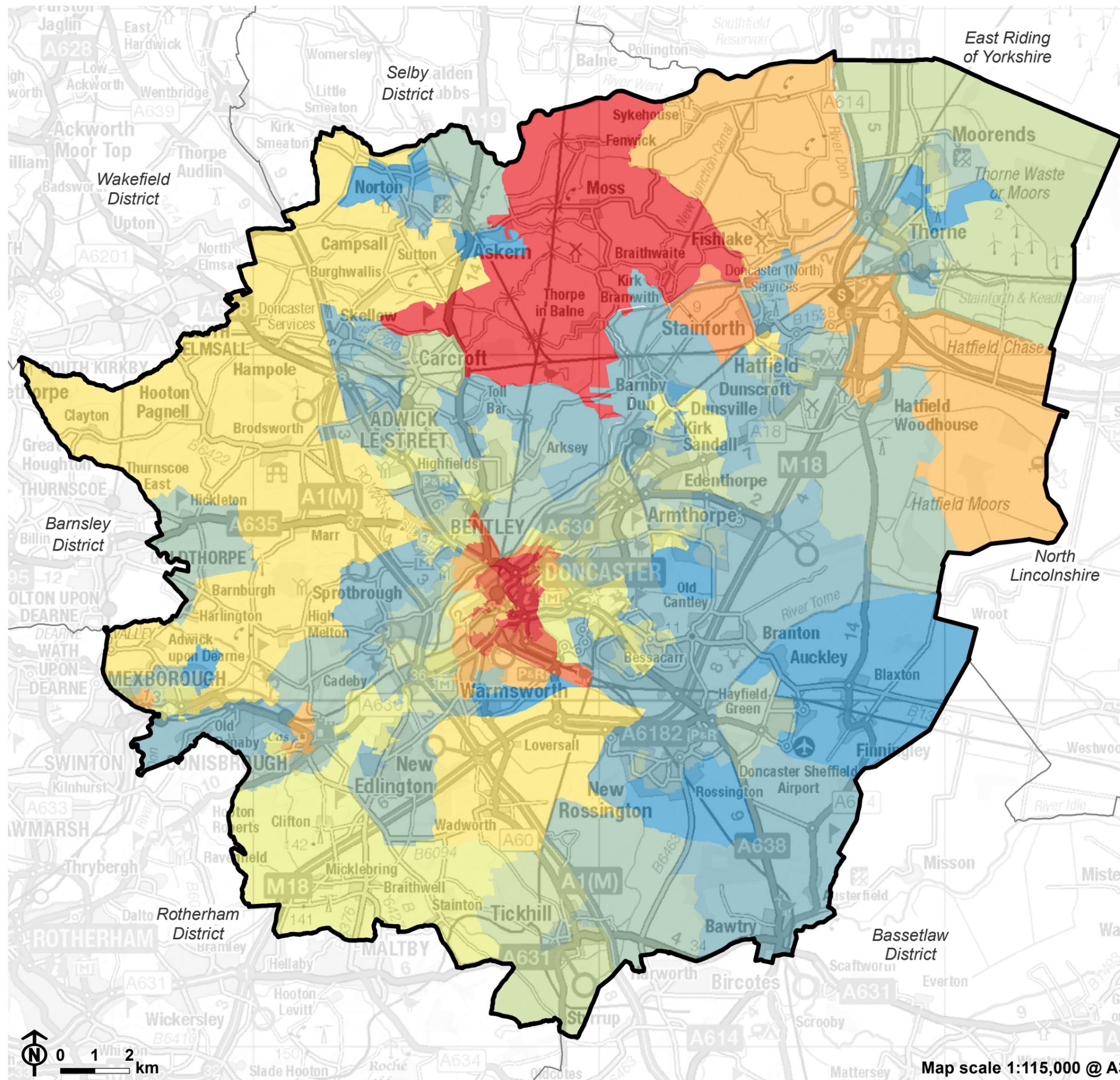
Map scale 1:115,000 @ A3

Figure 3.4: Health Deprivation



Map scale 1:115,000 @ A3

Figure 3.5: Living environment deprivation

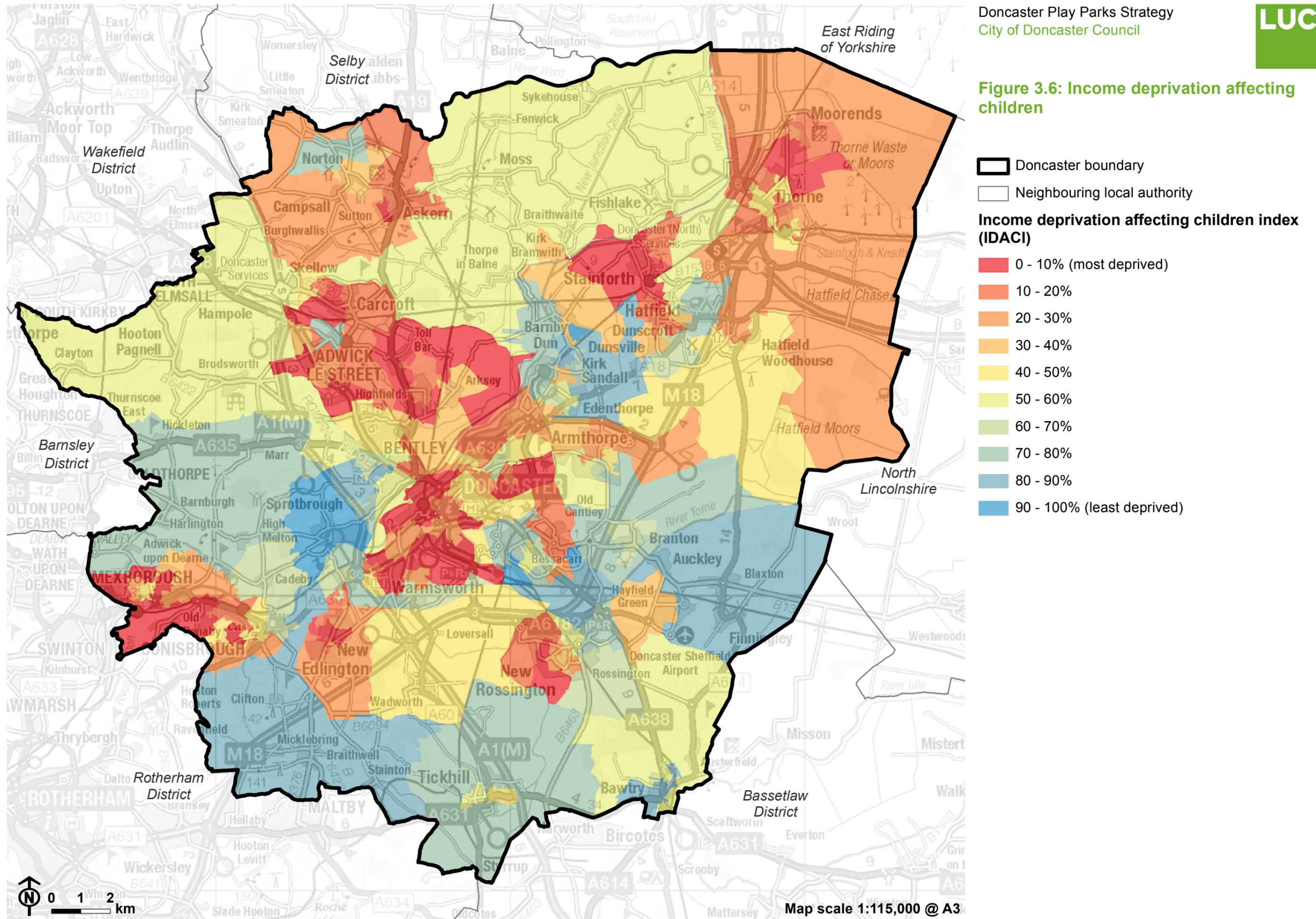


- Doncaster boundary
- Neighbouring local authority
- IMD Living Environment**
- 0 - 10% (most deprived)
- 10 - 20%
- 20 - 30%
- 30 - 40%
- 40 - 50%
- 50 - 60%
- 60 - 70%
- 70 - 80%
- 80 - 90%
- 90 - 100% (least deprived)



Map scale 1:115,000 @ A3

Figure 3.6: Income deprivation affecting children



Physical activity

3.14 Around 28.9% of adults in Doncaster are considered 'inactive', this compares to 23.4% for England and 24.2% for the wider region (Yorkshire and Humber). The percentage of physically active children and young people is around 44.2% which is slightly lower than the average for the region (45.7%) and England as a whole (47.2%). [\[See reference 7\]](#) 40% of children in Doncaster report to do an hour or more of activity a day. [\[See reference 8\]](#) However, data from 2015 /16, indicates that the utilisation of outdoor space for exercise / health reasons may be slightly higher (19.3%), compared to the region (17.5%) and England average (17.9%). [\[See reference 9\]](#)

3.15 There is an uneven geographical pattern of inactivity across Doncaster. Levels of inactivity are generally higher in areas that have higher levels of deprivation and face greater health and social inequalities. [\[See reference 10\]](#)

Combined Play Needs

3.16 Data from the proportion of the population under 18, IMD according to the health domain and income deprivation affecting children have been combined to create a play needs index. The results of this are shown in **Figure 3.7**.

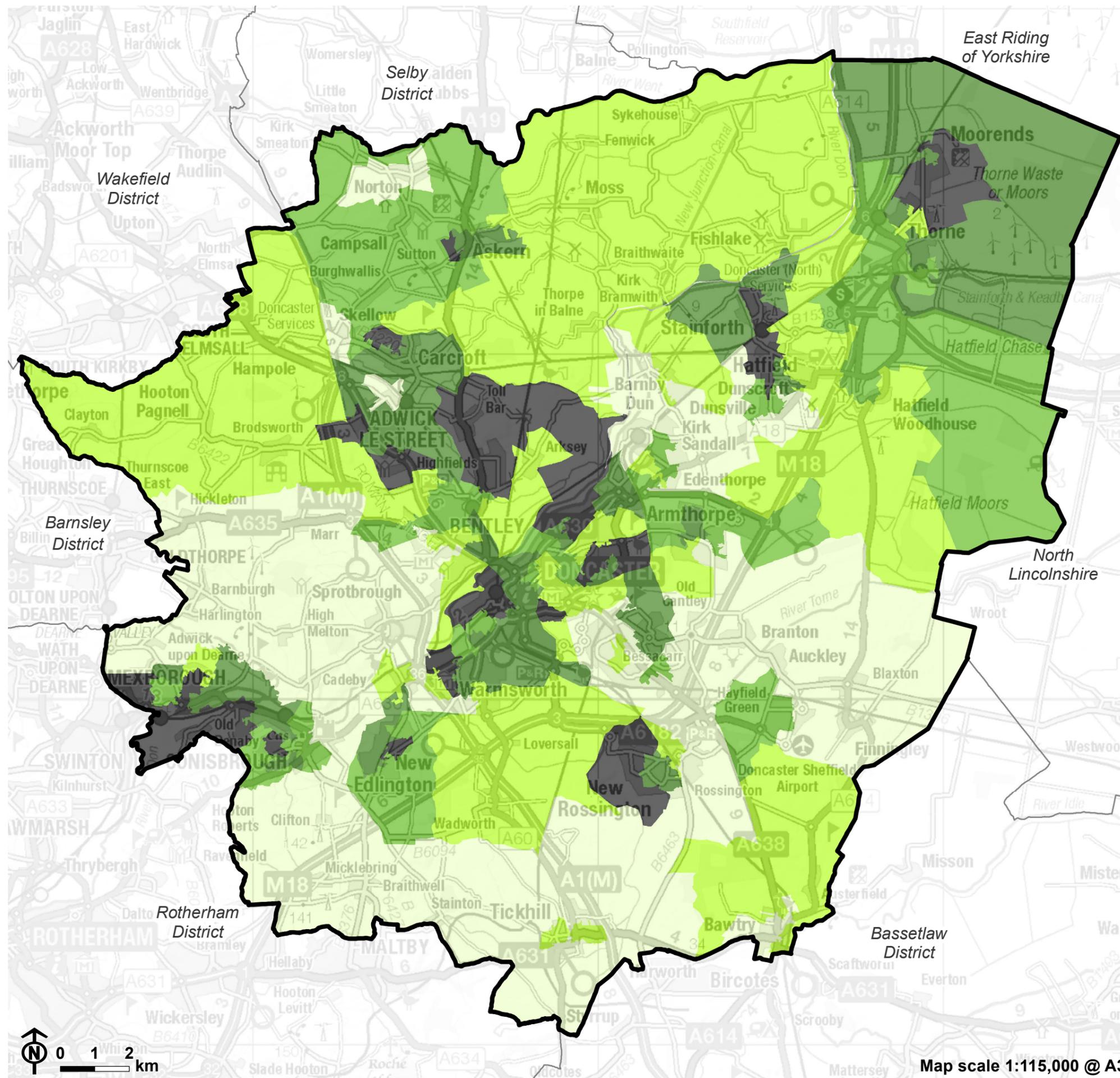
3.17 The highest play needs are in the following locations:

- Moorends
- Hatfield and east Stainforth
- Intake
- Wheatley Park
- Belle Vue and Hexthorpe
- Balby

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- New Rossington
- East area of New Edlington
- Conisbrough, Denaby and Mexborough
- North Bentley and Toll Bar
- Highfields and areas of west Adwick-le-Street
- Carcroft
- West Askern

Figure 3.7: Play needs



- Doncaster boundary
- Neighbouring local authority
- Play need**
 - Lower need
 -
 -
 - Higher need



Map scale 1:115,000 @ A3

Community insight

3.18 The following section summarises key community insights and consultation results that are relevant to the development of the play parks infrastructure policy. This includes previous consultation and research that has been undertaken by CDC and partners, and consultation undertaken as part of the development of the policy.

Previous consultation

Doncaster Pupil Lifestyle Survey (2022) [See reference 11]

Secondary pupils:

- 68% of pupils have a positive attitude to physical activity. LGBTQ and SEN pupils are much less likely to enjoy physical activity. Boys have a much more positive attitude to physical activity than any other group.
- 60% of those not undertaking physical activity prefer to do other things (a 14% increase from 2021). There is a recorded increase in the number of pupils who dislike being competitive, being outdoors or not being very good at it.
- 59% of pupils reported being 'happy' or 'very happy' with their life at the moment. Young carers and LGBTQ pupils are more likely than other groups to say they are not / not at all happy (29% young carers and 31% LGBTQ pupils). In the last year 71% of pupils say they have felt lonely at least sometimes.
- 88% of pupils are able to 'hang out' in safe places at home or near home. For young carers and LGBTQ pupils this decreases to 79% and 76%.

- Pupils feel safe at home but less safe going out after dark. Less than half of SEN pupils (40%) feel safe going out during the day.

Primary pupils:

- Overall, pupils have a positive attitude towards physical activities with 82% overall stating they enjoy it 'a lot' or 'quite a lot'. The result showed that boys tend to spend longer doing physical activity than girls.
- Dislike of physical exhaustion and concern over 'not being good at it' are the main reasons for not enjoying participation in physical activity. Of the girls who don't enjoy physical activity, 32% say it is because they feel shy about their bodies. Year 6 are more likely to feel like this than year 4 (37% compared to 17%).
- 70% of pupils are 'happy' or 'very happy' with their life at the moment. Lower than average reporting of being 'happy' or 'very happy' includes young carers (56%), SEN pupils (64%) and those with a disability (66%).
- The majority of pupils feel safe / very safe in their area during the day. Only 34% feel safe when going out after dark. 70% of pupils feel able to get involved in their community. Those with SEN and pupils from Ethnic Minority Groups are among those less likely to get involved in their community (both 62%).

Doncaster resident panel survey parks and open space (2021)

3.19 A 2021 Doncaster Residents' Panel survey (completed between June and July 2021 by 157 residents) found that:

- 29% of respondents go to parks and open spaces '*To visit a play area*'. 5% reported visiting a play area as the **main** reason for using parks and open spaces in Doncaster. 48% visit parks and open space '*to play with my children / family outing*.' This was the **main** reason for 28%.

- 72% of respondents felt that parks and open spaces were better cared for in the past. 67% felt that other parts of the country have better parks and open spaces than Doncaster.
- 87% agreed that it is important to have a park or open space close to where they live. The largest group (28%) indicated they are willing to travel between 11-20 minutes to reach a local open space. The second largest group (26%) indicated they are willing to travel 5-10 minutes. Although the type of provision was not specified.
- Less than half (46%) feel there are sufficient activities to on offer in Doncaster's parks and open spaces to encourage regular use.
- Respondents indicated a range of factors that put them off visiting parks and open spaces more regularly including; avoiding sites at night (85%), behaviour of others (64%), don't see people 'like me' exercising (55%). 32% do not feel safe in parks and green spaces all of the time.
- 72% agreed that parks and open spaces need to be about more than physical activity and playing. 64% indicated they would make more use of parks and open spaces if they were more welcoming in appearance.

Yorkshire Sport Foundation & Make Space for Us

3.20 Doncaster has strong connections with the Yorkshire Sport Foundation (YSF), which works predominantly in South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire and is part of a network of England-wide Active Partnerships.

3.21 Make space for us is an insight report led by YSF and Women in Sport, investigating how teenage girls feel about being active outdoors in their local parks and green spaces, focused around Sheffield, Kirklees & Rotherham. Consultation with school age children (13+ years) found that:

- Girls spend less of their spare time in parks and open spaces. 7 in every 10 female respondents indicated they want to be more active.

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- Girls mainly use parks for walking, socialising and playing on play equipment, as opposed to boys who are more likely to spend time riding bikes, running and playing organised sport.
- The main barriers to park usage for girls is lack of facilities such as toilets, litter and weather.
- Safety concerns which rank higher for girls than boys include 'boys shout at me', 'I've seen anti-social behaviour', 'my parents don't like me going' and 'I get harassed and people bother me / my friends'.
- Many girls feel excluded from their local park and feel they can't claim space for exercise, as spaces are often dominated by boys.

3.22 The report provides six key insights which can be utilized to create more inclusive parks and green spaces for girls, including:

- 1. The need for clean, cared for and attractive space with at least basic facilities for girls.
- 2. Promoting physical and emotional safety in parks.
- 3. Developing spaces in which harassment, scrutiny and judgement are minimized to help support more girls to feel comfortable when exercising in parks.
- 4. Equalising and promoting usage of specific exercise spaces for girls to create a more inclusive environment where both girls and boys feel welcome.
- 5. Actively promoting purposeful activity and organised opportunities for girls to exercise in parks, with more guidance on how space/equipment can be used.
- 6. Creating more playful, exciting and adventurous ways to get active, and involving girls in shaping activities and designing spaces will increase relevance and appeal.

Consultation and community engagement undertaken as part of the development of the policy

3.23 Several consultation exercises have been undertaken as part of the development of the policy, including:

- An online survey for children and young people.
- Contacting approximately 50 schools within Doncaster. This included a teacher led exercise to gather pupils' preferences and perceptions of using parks and open spaces for play.
- Review of research information from a project undertaken by Doncaster College Art students (aged 16-18), focussed on parks and open spaces in Doncaster.
- Telephone interviews with Councillors, service area Directors and Council Officers.
- Online consultation distributed to Parish Councils.
- Site specific engagement to inform enhancement plans for two sites. This comprised face to face engagement and an online survey.

3.24 The results of the consultation have been used to identify key issues and opportunities relating to play parks in Doncaster. The information gathered has informed the Vision, Aims, Action Plan and Principles set out in the policy. Site specific engagement has also been undertaken focussing on Conisbrough Recreation Ground and Glasgow Paddocks

Children and young person online survey

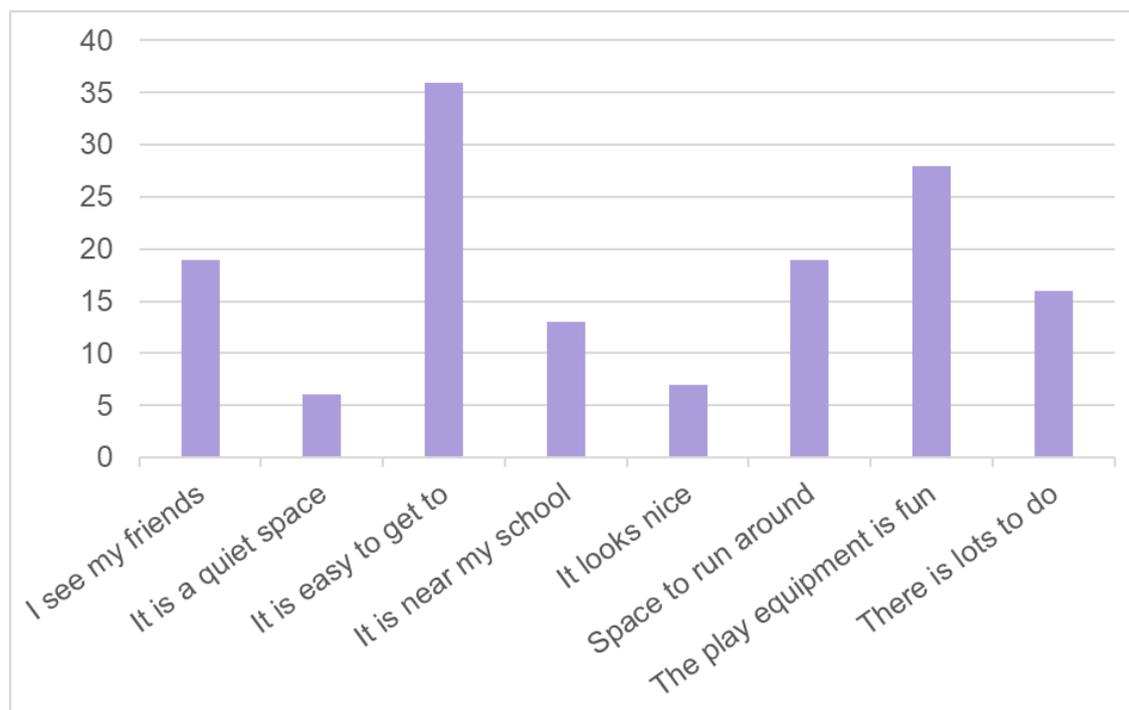
3.25 An online survey aimed at children and young people asked participants a several questions relating to play parks provision in Doncaster, including

aspects they like and dislike about play parks they visit. The survey was open for approximately three weeks and was completed by 69 respondents.

3.26 The age of respondents was mixed; 5 & under (25%), 12-15 years (21%) & 9-11 (16%). 18% indicated they were 18+ and it can be assumed that some respondents over 18 were parents and carers. The majority of respondents were female 66%, compared to 28% male & 3% who identify in another way.

3.27 The first question asked '*Please tell us what you like about a play park you visit?*'. Respondents were asked to pick three key things (from a list of 11) that they like about a play park they visit. The results are shown in **Figure 3.8**.

Figure 3.8: Please tell us what you like a play park you visit? (pick up to 3)

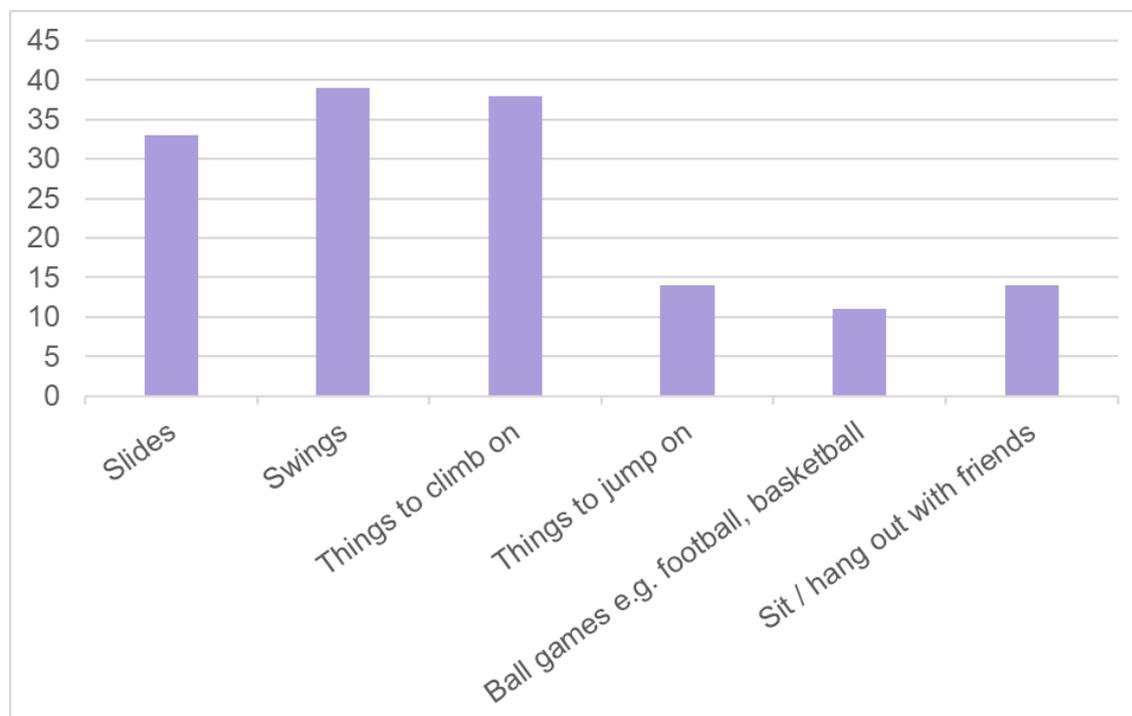


3.28 The two most frequently selected answers were '*it is easy to get to*' (52%) and '*the play equipment is fun*' (41%). This was followed by '*i see my friends*' & '*space to run around*' (both 28%), '*there is lots to do*' (23%) and '*it feel safe*' (22%). Answers selected least often were '*It is a quiet space*' and '*i can go on*

my own' (both 9%). The low number of respondents selecting 'I can go on my own' may reflect the large proportion of children under five providing responses.

3.29 Respondents were next asked 'What are the best things you like to do or play on?'. Three choices could be chosen out of a list of six. The results are shown in **Figure 3.9**.

Figure 3.9: What are the best things you like to play on? (pick up to 3)

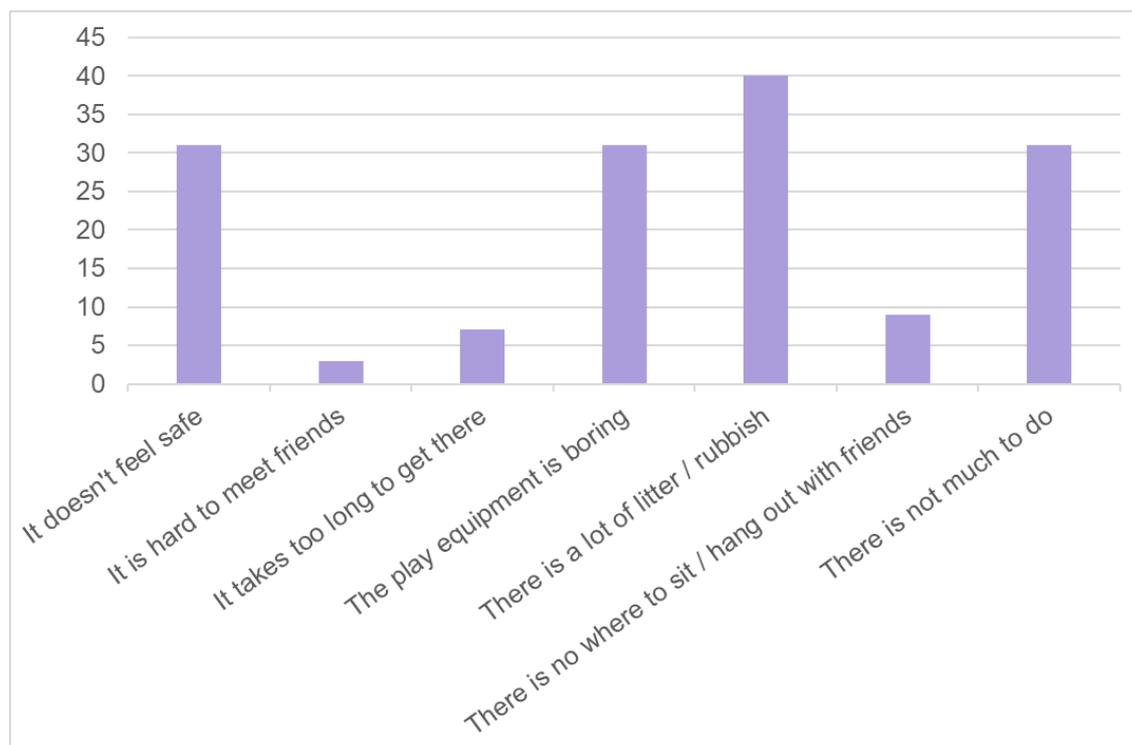


3.30 The results highlight three key activities that are of particular importance to those that responded, 'swings' (57%), 'slides' (48%) and 'things to climb on' (55%). The next most popular play activities included 'playing in natural areas', 'things to jump on' and 'sit / hang out with friends' (each selected by 20% of respondents).

3.31 The next question asked: 'Tell us what you don't like about a play park you visit?'. Respondents were asked to pick up to three options. The results of this are shown in **Figure 3.10**.

3.32 Four of the choices for this question were selected significantly more than the remainder of the options, this included *'there is a lot of rubbish / litter'* (selected by 58% of respondents), *'it doesn't feel safe'*, *'the play equipment is boring'* and *'there is not much to do'* (all selected by 45% of respondents).

Figure 3.10: Tell us what you don't like about a play park you visit? (pick up to 3)



3.33 Respondents were also presented with images of six play parks and asked which site looked best or worst and why. The images are shown below and their main characteristics / features summarised:

■ Image A:

- Small play area in a residential area.
- Wooden equipment, for younger age groups. The equipment comprises a low level obstacle course with opportunities with opportunities for balancing, climbing, crawling etc.

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- Grass surfacing, appears to be little space for running around and other informal play.
- Image B:
 - Image suggests the play area is a large area within a wider open space. There are mature trees beyond the play area.
 - One large piece of play equipment is shown (mixture of metal and plastic). It is a themed piece of equipment, resembling a boat. Key activities on offer appear to be challenging climbing, sliding and elevated walkways / areas for viewing & running about. The equipment would likely encourage and lend itself to imaginative play / make believe.
 - Surfacing appears to be worn grass or rubber surfacing with some grass growth. The surrounding area appears to provide enough space for running about / informal play. No other features such as seating are shown.
- Image C:
 - A Multi-Use Games Area within a wider open space.
 - Visibility throughout the area is good and fencing is low on one side.
 - The image appears to show a number of other features such as lighting, benches, table and chairs, bike racks and some other exercise equipment is just in view.
 - The whole area has hard surfacing for ball games, but there are large areas of short open grassland in the surrounding open space.
- Image D:
 - A small play area is built within a sloping site. There is a large set of concrete steps.
 - A large slide is incorporated into the slope and a smaller slide is located on a small mound. There are a couple of shaped rocks / concrete blocks that could be used for clambering / jumping, or as seating. No other play equipment is shown in the image.

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- There is an area of safety surfacing at the bottom of the slides.
- Image E:
 - A large play area with lots of landscaping / tree planting is shown, the area appears to be located in a built-up area.
 - Bespoke equipment is shown which incorporates sliding, elevated walkways / areas for viewing, space for running about / informal play, crawling / tunnels.
 - The type of surfacing is not clear but the images appears to show safety surfacing as paths in between areas of planting / landscaping.
- Image F:
 - A play area within a wider open space, the site fenced. Large trees and grass are shown outside the play area.
 - Play equipment generally seems to cater for younger age groups. Play equipment includes swings, rockers, a spinning / rotating feature, features to climb and a slide in the distance. There is space within and outside of the fenced play area for running around / informal play.
 - Safety surfacing is located around the equipment, with grass in between. There is a bench and a bin in the image.



Image A



Image B



Image C

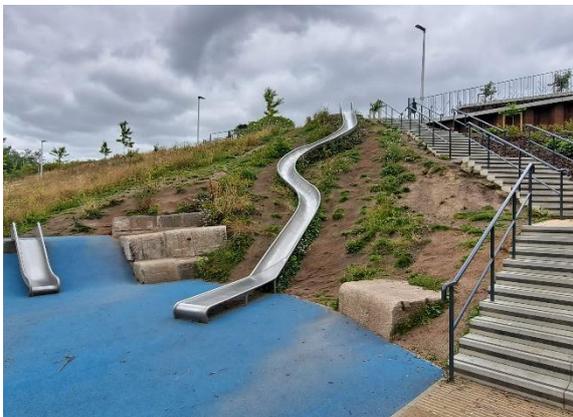


Image D



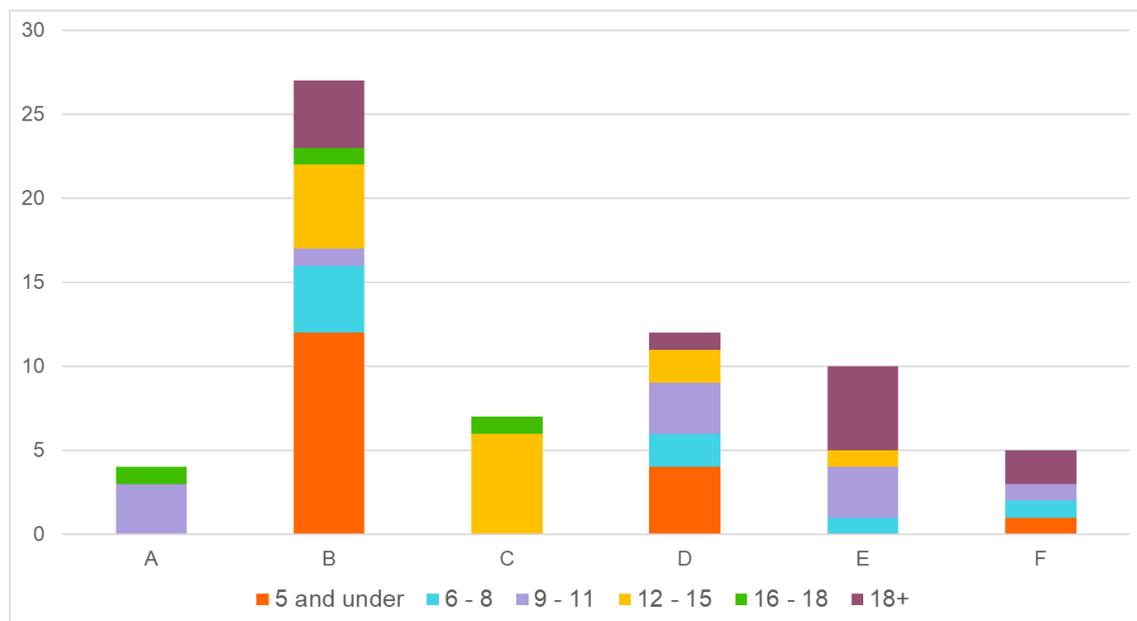
Image E



Image F

3.34 Respondents were asked ‘Which of these play parks do you think looks the best?’. The results indicate a strong preference for image B. This may be due to the immediate visual preference of a themed play area. The response highlights the value of equipment that may be more likely to entice children to play and encourage imaginative play or themed games. Whilst the preferred image does not show equipment that offers a wide range of obvious play activities (although climbing grips and slides are shown) the space shows ample room to run around and move about a different levels / hide etc.

Figure 3.11: Which of these play parks do you think looks the best? (results shown by age)



3.35 For respondents that selected image B as their preferred image, the following reasons were given:

- Lots to do.
- Make believe play.
- It has a pirate ship and I love pirate ships.
- Not boring. Only missing some swings.
- Good for adventures.

- Cool ship. Climbing wall.
- Exciting.
- Interesting shape.
- Plenty to do and climb on.

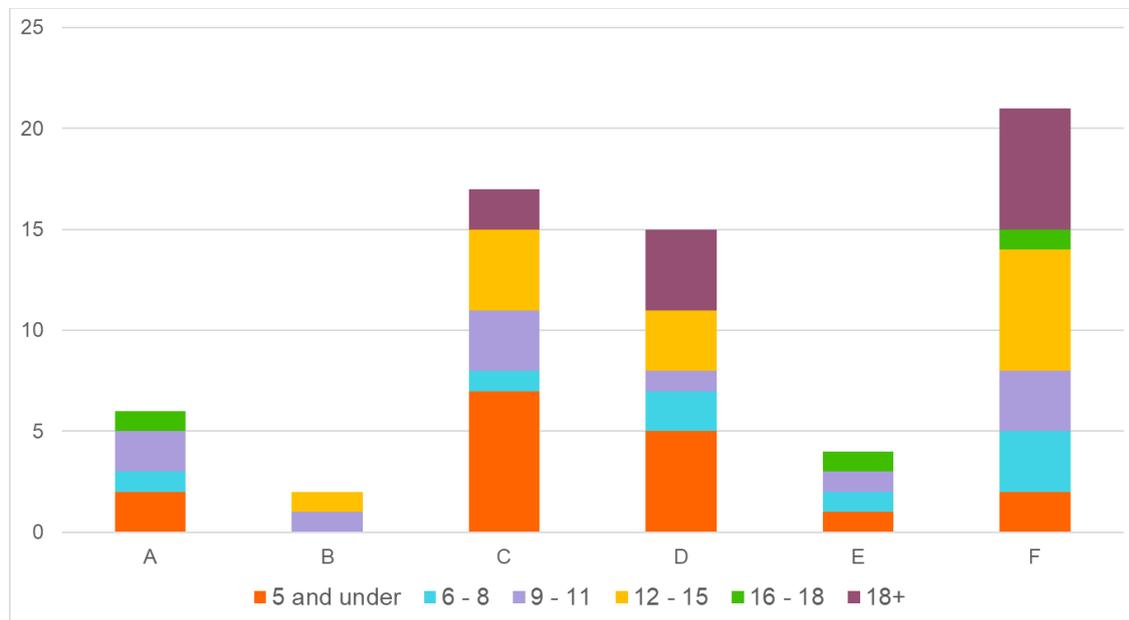
3.36 The following reasons were given for selecting other sites as the preferred image:

- Got lots of things.
- Seems to be more to do / most activities.
- A lot of space and many spots.
- Fun because it has a long slide.
- Lots of open space.
- Different sized slides, climbing things, places to sit.
- Lots of variety and welcoming.

3.37 **Figure 3.11** also shows the preferred image selected by age group. Some respondents within each age group selected the most preferred image overall (Image B). Image B was the image most frequently selected by those five & under and eight to six years. As might be expected image C was only selected by those between twelve to eighteen. However, a similar proportion of those between 12 to eighteen also selected image B, highlighting that there is likely still a desire amongst some older children and teenagers to engage with play equipment and not just areas for sport.

3.38 When asked '*Which of these play parks do you think looks the worst?*' the response was more mixed (as shown in **Figure 3.12**). The results showed a relatively even spread across images C, D & F. Image B and E were selected the least.

Figure 3.12: Which of these play parks do you think looks the worst?



3.39 When asked ‘*Why do you think that play park looks the worst?*’ A variety of reasons were given, many of which related to the age appropriateness of the facility, limited range of facilities, too much hard surfacing. Age and gender (F / M) indicated where provided)

Image C:

- I don't like football only areas (F, 9-11)
- Too many teens no play area (F, 18+)
- Too old for me (M, 5 & under)
- Looks like you can only play sports (12-15)
- Boring. No slides (F, 5 & under)
- Not interested in tennis or basketball (M, 9-11)
- No play equipment and it is all concrete (F, 12-15)

Image D:

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- There isn't a lot to do (12-15)
- Its boring, only 2 slides (F, 5 & under)
- Overgrown and not maintained, only two slides and not much to do (F, 6-8)
- Not much games (F, 5 & under)
- Not much choice of things to do (F, 18+)
- Lack of variety (M)
- Not enough equipment (F, 9-11)

Image F:

- Its for babies (F, 12-15)
- Not much to do (F, 18 – F, 12-15)
- Its all baby things (M, 5 & under)
- For one age group (M, 12-15)
- Not many things to climb on. Not appealing to the eye. (F, 12-15)
- Flat, boring, basic, apart not natural areas around. (F, 18+)
- Doesn't look natural or suitable for different ages (F, 18+)
- Old fashioned. (M, 6-8)
- Same as my park / like what we've got already. (M, 9-11, F, 9-11)
- Not exciting enough (F, 6-8)

Primary school consultation

3.40 Approximately 50 primary schools were contacted throughout Doncaster and asked to conduct a teacher led exercises gathering children's views on play parks. Responses were received from several schools with a summary of engagement and comments from around 53 pupils aged between five and eight.

Prompt 1: Can you tell me something you like about a park or playground you visit. Are there areas in the park or playground you like to play in? What fun things do you like to do in the park or playground?

3.41 The responses for this discussion suggest the children associate a good play experience at a park or playground they visit with a wide variety of activities. Whilst some activities described are associated with fixed play equipment, quite a few responses relate to having access to natural areas or just suitable places to run, ride or play ball games.

A range of specific activities were mentioned including:

- Swinging
- Scooting / bike riding
- An area where I can play football.
- A zipline that you can sit on.
- Monkey bars
- See saw that is also a rocket.
- Round about and I love going fast on it.
- I like to have things to climb on.

Some of these specifically relate to engaging with nature and wildlife:

- Climbing trees
- Building dens
- Rolling down hills
- Feeding the ducks
- I like parks that have water to play in.

Opportunities for social activities were also noted:

- Playing games at the park, with my friends.
- Having picnics with my family.
- Big swing with a net so you can have multiple people on the swing.

Other specific features / characteristics noted as important:

- Variety of different playgrounds all in one park / lots of different parks in one area / I like parks with different equipment to play on.
- Lots of different equipment for different ages / I like when there is parks to suit different ages.
- Outdoor gym
- Its close to my house
- The swings go really high.
- Loads of paths to ride my bike and scooter.
- Tree house
- There's a pirate ship at my park.

Prompt 2: Can you tell me something you don't like about a park or playground that you visit. Are there different things to play on that make the playground or park fun? Do you feel safe and happy when you are in the park or playground? Is it easy to get to the park or playground?

3.42 Responses from this discussion highlights a range of issues and detracting features experienced by children at play parks they visit which likely limit opportunities for a rich and varied play experience. Key issues were associated with overall levels of maintenance, condition of equipment and a lack of variety and choice in play opportunities, either overall or for their age group.

Vandalism / maintenance / litter:

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- I don't like that there's nearly always something that is broken or written on.
- I don't like when the park isn't available to use (it's blocked off).
- On some of the equipment, people have written rude pictures and words and I don't like it / there is spray paint on some parts of the
- There was glass in the baby swing.
- I don't like when parts of the equipment are missing (i.e. the seat for the swing) / some of the nets on the football pitches are missing.
- There's litter at the park / there needs to be bigger bins.
- The equipment is becoming old and broken

Use of the park and ease of access:

- Some of us don't have a park that we can walk to / its not close to my house.
- It's not very busy at the park so we think they need to be advertised.
- No undercover for when it rains.

Variety / age appropriateness / inclusivity

- There is not enough equipment. It's not a very big basketball court.
- I don't like when all of the things at the park are designed for older children.
- There's sometimes age limits to parks so that there's not something for everybody to do.
- The monkey bars are too high.
- The basketball net is too high.

College students parks and open space research (2022)

3.43 Doncaster Future Parks has undertaken several projects to capture the voice of children and young people. A 2022 project worked with Doncaster College art department, which asked students (aged 16-18) to explore parks and open spaces in a range of artistic mediums. A sample of images from their sketch books from the project have been reviewed in order to help develop an understanding of how they experience and perceive parks. Outputs from this project also included ideas for enhancement developed by the students. These ideas highlight which features and characteristics may be less or more important for this age group.

Specific issues and characteristics of sites that were noted by students included:

- Lack of interest and variety for younger people.

'...a few childs play activities like regular old swings and slides... I honestly immediately thought about how boring the play areas are'.

'I want to add a woodland / fairy trail area for kids to explore as currently there is only large empty fields. I wanted the park to be a place where kids can use their imagination... so they can create stories and adventures'.

- General maintenance and condition of facilities.

'The more I walked around the park, the more I realised how run down everything is'.

'It used to be a popular place to hang out and see friends even for the older people, it now isn't used much and hasn't been upgraded or changed in years'.

- Whether sites felt safe or not.

'The parks safety on a scale on 1-10 would 3/10'.

'The park is a hotspot for things like drug use and vandalism which makes it unpopular for the local families and overrun with crime'.

Chapter 3 Understanding the need for play provision in Doncaster

- How accessible the site was for those who use wheelchairs or pushchairs.
- Students often looked beyond fenced play areas and traditional 'teen' areas at the wider site and quality of the landscape.

'Flowers and plants make the area pretty which then leads to more people visiting the area'

- Lack of other facilities.

'no café / food', 'It would be much better with access to toilets / restrooms'.

3.44 Students suggested a number of potential enhancements for sites in Doncaster, which highlight the following as key considerations:

- Students still showed an interest in play equipment despite being over 16, suggesting that challenging equipment for older children and teenagers should be considered as part of play park design where possible.
- Equipment that was suggested as part of students enhancement proposal frequently included some form of imaginative play for younger children (i.e. space rocket climbing frame, castle, fire truck etc.).
- Community participation and allowing local children to help shape play opportunities was noted as important. Providing teenagers and children the opportunity for self-expression (i.e. retaining graffiti where it enhances the character of the site). This may be linked to encouraging a sense of ownership and participation with green spaces and parks amongst children and teenagers.
- Adding features for interest (such as sculpture trails) and areas to explore where sites were perceived as bare and empty.
- Retaining and adding natural vegetation to encourage wildlife close to where people are, and to provide interest.
- Suitable seating areas for different types of people was also frequently noted – e.g. for older carers, parents and teenagers. Many suggestions were around creating social spaces, considering the whole site and not just equipped play facilities.

- Many of the suggested enhancements included detail on a range of senses such as what colours could be considered for features or seating areas.

Online consultation distributed to Parish Councils

3.45 A short online survey was sent to Parish and Town Councils within Doncaster to understand the role of these groups in managing play parks.

3.46 Responses were received from:

- Armthorpe Parish Council
- Auckley Parish Council
- Barnburgh and Harlington Parish Council
- Barnby Dun with Kirk Sandall Parish Council
- Bawtry Town Council
- Cantley with Branton Parish Council
- Edenthorpe Parish Council
- Wadworth Parish Council

3.47 There were a number of key findings from this consultation:

- Most of the councils that responded currently own or manage play parks. Management includes inspections of play equipment, risk assessments and management of surrounding vegetation (e.g. cutting grass).
- There was a range of key priorities presented by the different parish councils. These included:
 - Improving the provision of sport facilities e.g. football pitches, green gyms and MUGAs (3 respondents)

- More age appropriate provision (variously highlighting the gaps for younger children including toddlers and older teenagers) (3 respondent)
- Improvement in accessible play parks (1 respondents)
- Improved maintenance including litter picks (1 respondent)
- More funding (1 respondent)
- Just over half of the councils that responded said they would be interested in adopting additional play spaces.
- There were a number of suggestions for how Parish / Town Councils could work better with CDC:
 - Improved budgetary forecast and funding (4 responses)
 - Better communication / more collaborative working (4 responses)
 - Support / collaboration with maintenance and inspections (2 responses)
 - Running organised events within parks to help promote these (1 response)

Telephone interviews with Councillors, service area Directors and Council Officers

3.48 Interviews with local councillors, service area directors and council officers were undertaken to gain a better understanding of the wider management, strategic barriers, opportunities and challenges to play provision in Doncaster. The results of this have been fed through in the City of Doncaster's revenue budget 2023/24 – 2025/26 report sets out that the Council has identified a funding gap of £10.2m for 2023/24, rising to £22.3m over the next three years (at time of publication). The Council has seen its core Government funding reduce by 27% in real terms since 2010 compared to an average of 20% for England. This equates to a £340 reduction per resident. Local spending is

becoming more narrowly focused on Children and Adult's Services, including Public Health, with over 67% being spent in these areas in 2023/24.

3.49 Opportunities for future management section in Chapter 4, and informed the Vision, Aims, Action Plan and Principles.

Key Considerations: Wider Play Needs

- Population density is higher than the national average, including some areas of very high population (greater than 9000 people/km²). In these areas, open space and play parks are an important place to connect young people to the outdoors and nature.
- There are areas of significant deprivation, including health deprivation in Doncaster, which has an impact on life expectancy. Levels of inactivity for children are generally lower in Doncaster compared to the wider Yorkshire area and England as a whole. Play can help embed healthy and active lifestyles from a young age.
- Barriers to feeling safe and happy, including within outdoor environments, are more significant for young carers, LGBTQ and SEN groups for secondary school aged pupils. Primary school children were more likely to have a positive attitude to parks than secondary school children. Gender also affects how people use parks: girls are more likely to use parks for walking, socialising and play, whereas boys are more likely to spend time riding bikes, running and playing organised sport.
- Whilst 87% of people felt it was important to have parks and gardens nearby, less than half of people felt like parks offered sufficient activities to encourage regular use.
- Key features which make parks attractive for young people are being easy to get to, including play equipment (notably swings, climbing apparatus, offering a range of opportunities), being free from litter and feeling safe. In addition to fixed play, primary school children liked access to natural areas, places to run or ride bikes and areas to play ball games. Issues around safety, notably risks of using parks at night

and the behaviour of others were key factors which discouraged use of parks.

- Enhancements suggested by students include more challenging equipment for over 16s, focus on imaginative play within equipment, sensory features, social seating areas, incorporating natural vegetation and involving children and young people within decisions.

Chapter 4

Overview of play provision in Doncaster

Summary of play parks

4.1 The following section provides a summary of play parks in Doncaster. A range of baseline information has been gathered for all play parks in Doncaster, including:

- Play area name
- Location
- Ownership / management
- Fence / signage present
- Types of play in Doncaster

4.2 Play parks in Doncaster have been categorised according to the type of play on offer. This has primarily been based on the age range catered for, with further breakdown provided for equipment for older children.

- Play parks primarily aimed at very young children (i.e. 5 years old or less): Local Areas for Play (**LAPs**).
- Play parks aimed at children who can play more independently (i.e. 5 – 11 years): Local Equipped Areas for Play (**LEAPs**).
- Play Parks / features aimed at older children (i.e. 11+). Including:
 - Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (play equipment for older children) (**NEAPs**)
 - MUGAs (Multi Use Games Areas)
 - Skate Parks

Chapter 4 Overview of play provision in Doncaster

- BMX track
- Single Basketball Hoop (SBP)
- Teen shelter
- Other recreational facilities recorded as part of this category includes:
 - Outdoor Gym
 - Tennis

4.3 This policy focuses on play parks owned and managed by City of Doncaster Council. However, for the purposes of understanding the current baseline of play parks within Doncaster and play parks provision overall (such as accessibility), play parks owned and managed by others have also been identified. Other organisations that own / manage play parks in Doncaster (other than CDC) include:

- Parish Councils
- St Leger (Housing provider CDC owned housing stock)
- Doncaster Culture and Leisure Trust
- South Yorkshire Housing Association
- Bawtry Action for Recreation and Sports
- Play parks on private developments (i.e. likely the responsibility of a management company or similar)

Summary

4.4 As shown in **Table 4.1** below, 286 publicly accessible play parks have been identified within Doncaster.

4.5 The majority of play parks / features in Doncaster are owned and managed by CDC (189). Parish Councils own / manage around 75 play parks. Around 22 other play parks in the area are managed by other organisations.

4.6 Of the play parks focussed on play equipment, Local Equipped Areas for Play (95) are most common, followed by Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play. The most common feature aimed at older children are MUGAs (56 in total). Few play parks are aimed specifically at very young children (i.e. under 5). However, it should be noted that other play types may also provide some facilities for younger children.

Table 4.1: Summary of play sites (ownership and play type)

Managing organisation	LAP	LEAP	NEAP	MUGA	Skate park	BMX track	SBP	Outdoor gym	Tennis	Teen shelter	Total
CDC	4	54	39	44	12	1	4	12	5	14	189
Parish	2	29	8	10	6	-	8	5	2	5	75
St Leger	-	8	2		1	-	3	-	-	1	15
Private	-	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Doncaster Culture & Leisure Trust	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
South Yorkshire Housing Association	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Bawtry Action for Leisure and Sport	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total	6	95	50	56	19	1	15	17	7	20	286

Current management

Organisational structure and overarching management approach

4.7 Many play parks managed by CDC are located within parks. It should therefore be recognised that play parks are managed as part of a wider network of public space, green space assets and facilities provided for community use. Day to day management and maintenance of play parks is the responsibility of the Street Scene Team which sits within the Economy and Environment Directorate. The Street Scene team includes operatives who are able to undertake a rolling programme of play safety inspections, and independent assessors are engaged to undertake safety inspections as part of the annual cycle of management.

4.8 The management of CDC play parks is currently focussed around a rolling programme of play safety and condition surveys, and staff are engaged on this task year round. Repair and maintenance of equipment is largely undertaken on a reactive basis. Where equipment is deemed beyond repair, or is reported as dangerous, it is removed. Equipment that is removed is replaced where possible, generally on a like for like basis, although equipment is not always replaced if funds are not available, and the overall condition of the remaining equipment does not justify the replacement.

4.9 There is currently no overarching, proactive or strategic planning for providing play enhancements or prioritising where resources may be best placed over a period of time.

4.10 The associated maintenance operations carried out on play parks ensures equipment and surfacing provided complies with EN1176 and EN1177.

4.11 Other services that are managed as part of the wider Street Scene and Environment service include arboriculture and horticulture, street cleaning, parks, biodiversity and climate change. City of Doncaster Council also has a Sustainability Unit which includes Woodland Rangers. CDC also facilitates and supports Doncaster Green Space Network which is a collaborative network of community groups, volunteers and organisations with an interest in protecting and enhancing the natural environment and supporting others to do the same. Whilst this network does not necessarily have direct involvement with the management of play parks, the associated groups wider aims, interests and activities may need to be considered as part of future planning and management of play park enhancements in the future.

4.12 A range of other CDC departments and service providers are responsible for the planning and management of other assets, facilities and services associated with parks and open spaces. These are spread across the five directorates, and consultation with officers has highlighted that this may present challenges with regard to providing a co-ordinated and strategically planned service for open spaces, play parks and outdoor sports. Example service areas associated with parks and the department / directorate that has current responsibility (in brackets) is summarised below:

- Play parks, parks infrastructure, health and safety (Street Scene – Economy and Environment)
- Parks pavilions, buildings, licencing and leases (Assets & Facilities Management – Economy and Environment)
- Pitch booking & events booking (Events – Children, Young People and Families)
- Sports development (Leisure Services – Public Health)
- Community support (Stronger Communities – Adults Health and Wellbeing)
- Legal matters (Legal and Democratic Services – Corporate Resources)

Wider financial context

4.13 City of Doncaster's revenue budget 2023/24 – 2025/26 report sets out that the Council has identified a funding gap of £10.2m for 2023/24, rising to £22.3m over the next three years (at time of publication). The Council has seen its core Government funding reduce by 27% in real terms since 2010 compared to an average of 20% for England. This equates to a £340 reduction per resident. Local spending is becoming more narrowly focused on Children and Adult's Services, including Public Health, with over 67% being spent in these areas in 2023/24.

Opportunities for future management

4.14 Consultation as part of the development of the policy has highlighted several issues and opportunities related to effective planning and management of play park provision:

- The current management of parks is at times fragmented. Improved co-ordination of the planning and management of all assets within parks (including play parks) would help to ensure investment and management regimes provide maximum benefit, are cost effective and provide a better experience to communities.
- Management of play parks by the Street Scene Team is often reactive and generally focuses on essential safety work, with little proactive planning for enhancement work due to lack of time and resources.
- Opportunities to involve young people in 'active planning' rather than repeated consultation exercises (which could add to 'consultation fatigue') should be considered. There are existing forums (such as the Youth Council), which may provide future opportunities for better long term engagement.
- There may be opportunities for parks management to be more entrepreneurial. This may also support the development of 'destination sites' which provide a wider offer for communities and families with young

children. This could include ice cream kiosks, coffee vans or other facilities that can add to the value of a play park. Money from such activities such as car parking at parks should be ring fenced to spent on park management.

- Management and future enhancements to play parks should consider sustainability and consider recycled features within parks and including recycling bins.
- There is a general consensus of ensuring the quality of play parks over the quantity and number of play parks that are provided. Future maintenance requirements are also a key factor in determining the number of play parks that can be maintained to the highest standard within current resource and management arrangements.
- Inclusivity and ensuring play parks provide for the needs of a wide range of ages and abilities (both physical and mental ability) should be a priority for the future. This includes creating suitable spaces for teenagers and teenage girls.
- Creating fun spaces does not need to involve lots of expensive equipment. There is also room for incorporating QR codes, public art, sensory play, water play.

4.15 An effective policy for play parks infrastructure would likely benefit from a strategic review of the delivery of services associated with parks which are currently spread across all directorates. This could include the development of a strategic group to ensure co-ordination in the application of the policy. This would help to develop a co-ordinated approach to:

- Identify potential cross benefits across different services and being opportunistic when allocating resources for open space and play park investment.
- Develop open spaces within local areas that act as destinations and offer a range of facilities for different types of users.
- Maximise any income generating opportunities and deciding where income is best re-invested.

- Build a case for site enhancement plans and rationalisation of play parks, ensuring benefits from investment are maximised in locations of most need and not spread too thinly. For example, a neighbourhood will likely derive more benefits from one high quality, high value open space than multiple low value sites that cannot feasibly be maintained to a high standard.
- Provide a more user-friendly service to customers and residents, who would benefit from a co-ordinated approach when interacting and engaging with different service areas associated with parks and open spaces – including play parks.

Key Considerations: Current Play Provision

- The most common types of play park are LEAPs, NEAPs and MUGAs. Different types of play park provide opportunities for different activities and are attractive to different people. Keeping a variety of provision across Doncaster is important.
- Whilst CDC own and manage the vast majority of play parks in Doncaster, there are a significant number of play parks that are managed by other organisations, most notably Parish Councils. Open communication and opportunities for collaboration should be sought. The vision and principles of this policy should be used to promote a consistent approach to play park provision within Doncaster.
- Ongoing management, maintenance and inspections focus primarily on play parks as a stock of individual equipment / assets, and does not include a strategic understanding of the provision of the play parks in terms of quality and play value.
- The management of parks and other outdoor spaces, including sports pitches and public buildings is spread across a number of service areas within CDC. This can create barriers to managing parks in a coordinated way.
- Play parks are not a statutory requirement and funding for enhancement and ongoing management is generally limited. Adopting a policy of each

neighbourhood area providing at least one high quality play park that can act as a destination site, rather than multiple sites provisioning the same area, will help to deliver better value play overall, and ensure high maintenance standards can be achieved at all times.

Chapter 5

Developing an approach to assessing the quality and value of play parks in Doncaster

Current approach

5.1 Play parks within Doncaster are currently subject to a rolling programme of condition and safety assessments. The condition of individual play items, surfacing and other features (e.g. bins and benches) is scored between 'A' (satisfactory) to 'D' (poor).

- A (satisfactory)
 - Paint in good condition. No signs of deterioration. All parts present and matching (i.e. colour). Clean with no encroaching weed growth / vegetation.
- B (weathered)
 - Paint showing signs of wear. Some signs of deterioration (some visible rust). All parts present, some mismatching parts. Some patch repairs to the safer surface. Clean, minimal encroaching weed growth.
- C (deteriorating)
 - Paint showing signs of wear & discolouration. Clear signs of deterioration (visible rust & flaking paint). Missing parts but the unit is still functional to some degree. Multiple patch repairs to the safer surface. Encroaching weed growth/vegetation.
- D (poor)
 - Most base material exposed. Large amounts of deterioration (visible rust & flaking paint). Missing parts or full units greatly affecting the play

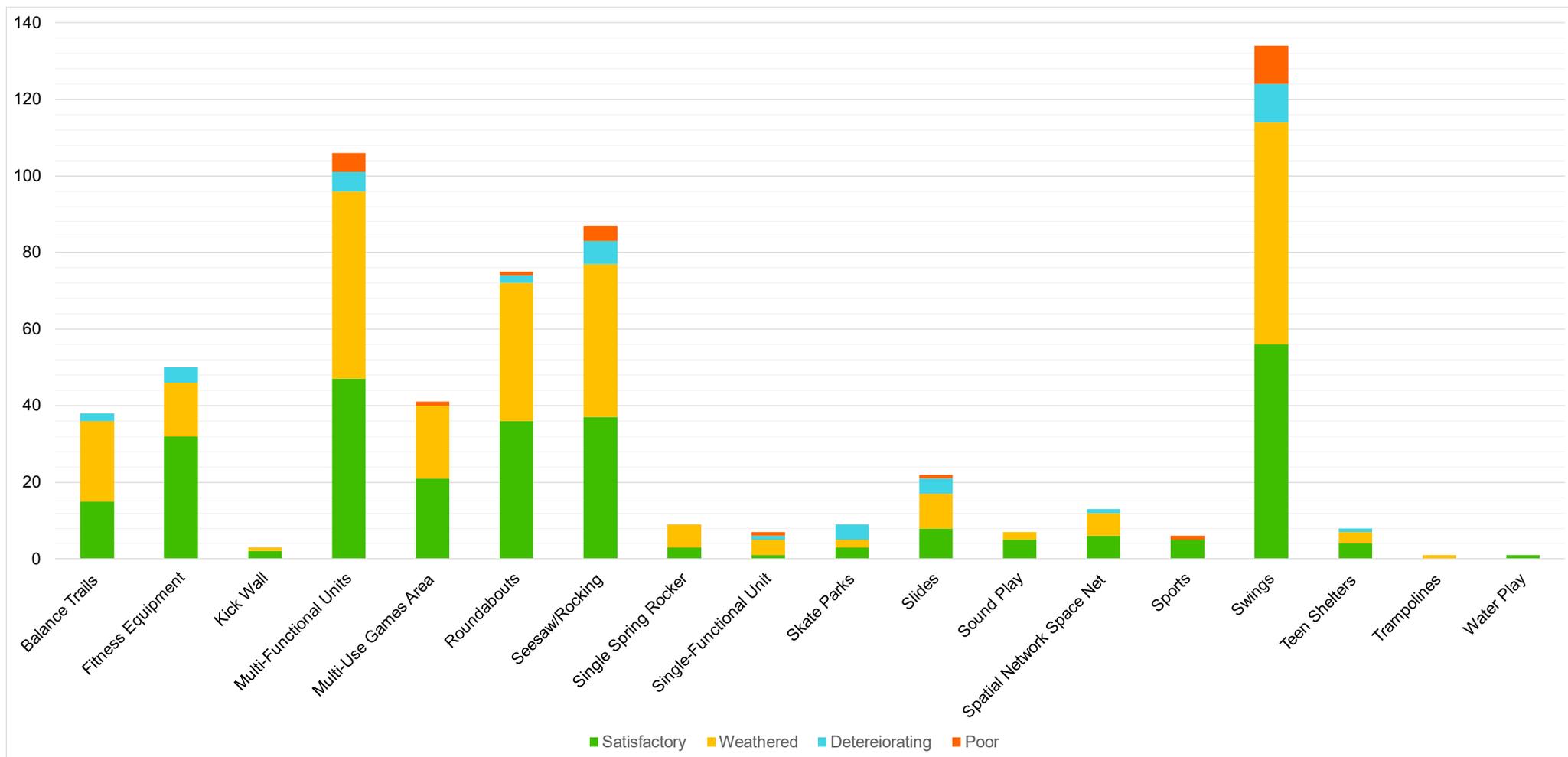
Chapter 5 Developing an approach to assessing the quality and value of play parks in Doncaster

value. Multiple patch repairs to the safer surface. Loose fill requires topping up. Weed growth/vegetation.

5.2 Figure 5.1 summarises the existing play equipment in Doncaster and the condition it is in. Key findings from this show that:

- Swings and Multi-functional units are the most common type of equipment in Doncaster.
- Overall, most of the equipment is in a satisfactory or weathered condition.
- Skate Parks are generally in a worse condition than other play equipment – 44% of skate parks are in a deteriorating condition.

Figure 5.1: Current condition and stock of play equipment



Proposed approach to assessing play quality and value

5.3 The current approach will continue to be an essential part of recording the condition of individual features and identifying the need for essential safety works. As part of the development of a policy for Doncaster's Play Parks, a supplementary quality and value audit approach has been developed. Whilst the condition and maintenance of features is considered as part of the proposed approach, a range of other criteria provide the opportunity to assess the range of play activities or 'affordances' on offer and wider play value. Where play parks occur within a wider site, it is also recommended that the characteristics of the surrounding site are considered and taken into account. This approach will provide the opportunity to undertake a strategic assessment of play parks across Doncaster and help to identify where future investment could be prioritised to deliver maximum benefit and value for local communities. It has been developed around five key themes (A-D) and a range of criteria, summarised below. Criteria have either been defined as relating to quality or value.

- 'Value' relates to the presence of various features and facilities, value to the community, location and standard of design.
- 'Quality' covers aspects relating to management and the condition of features and facilities.

5.4 Quality and value are fundamentally different and can be completely unrelated. For example, an open space may be high quality (by virtue of it being well maintained and in good condition), but if it is not accessible or have an appropriate level of facilities for the type of site, it may be of low value. Conversely, an open space could have an appropriate level of facilities (high value), but the condition of the site could still fall short (low quality).

Chapter 5 Developing an approach to assessing the quality and value of play parks in Doncaster

5.5 Scoring for most criteria is based on a scale of 1 to 5. Quality scores broadly translate as:

- 1 = very poor
- 2 = poor
- 3 = fair
- 4 = good
- 5 = very good

5.6 Value scores broadly translate as 1 = poor / lower value to 5 = higher value. For some criteria only 1 value score is added to take account of the presence of the feature.

Sample audit

5.7 A sample audit of eighteen sites has been undertaken. The purpose of the sample audit was to:

- Test the proposed approach to auditing play provision across Doncaster.
- Demonstrate how audit results may inform enhancement plans for specific sites.
- Demonstrate how audit results can highlight the relative 'performance' of sites to identify priority areas and sites for enhancement, or to inform rationalisation / removal of sites where appropriate.
- Provide an overview of key issues and opportunities that are likely relevant for the management of all play parks, to inform the development of design principles and strategic actions.

5.8 It is intended that all play parks within Doncaster will be subject to a quality and value audit, which will be incorporated within the ongoing rolling programme of condition assessments. This will be an important step in setting

Chapter 5 Developing an approach to assessing the quality and value of play parks in Doncaster

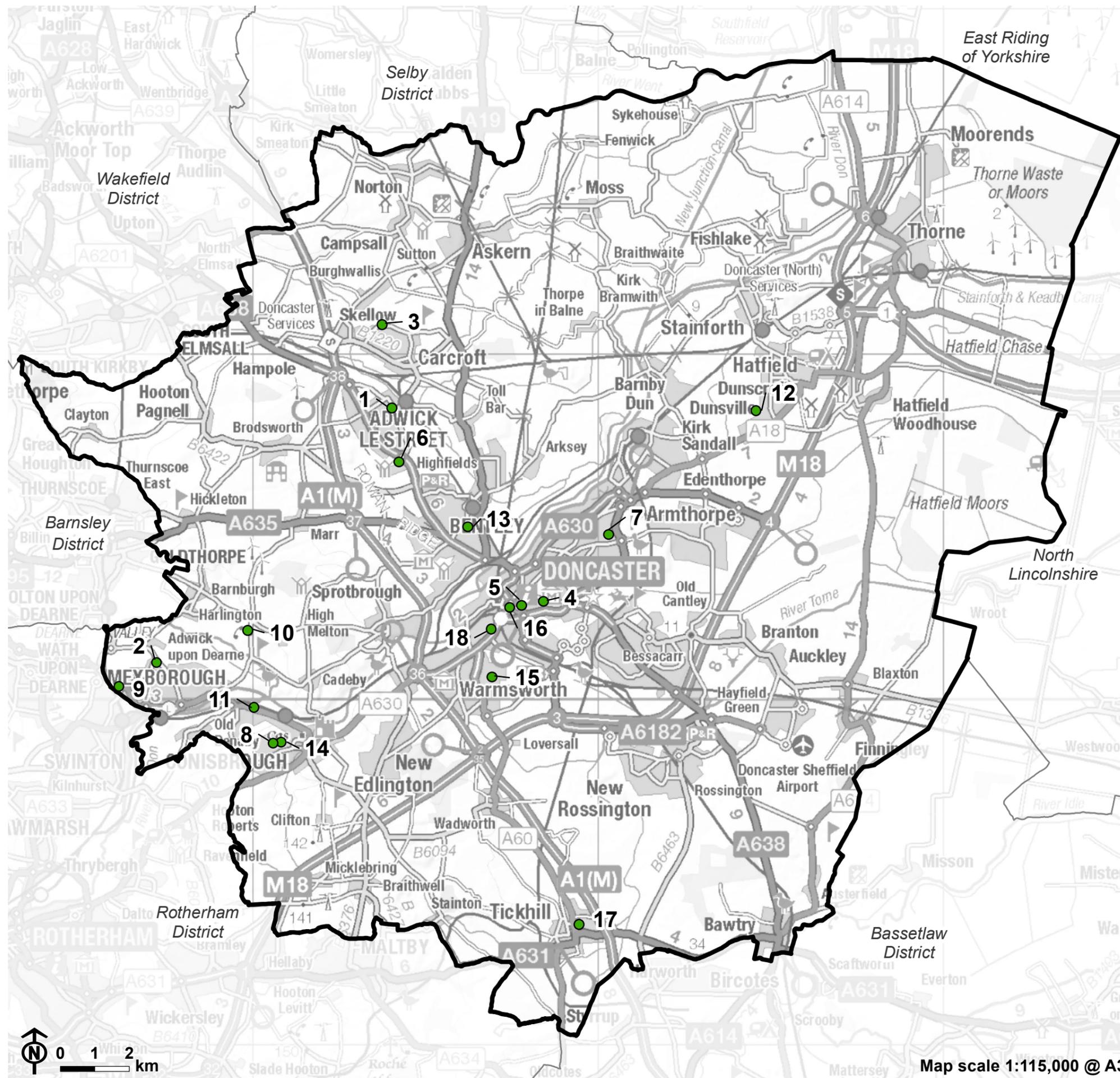
out the relative 'performance' of play parks across Doncaster (i.e. higher or lower scoring sites) to inform future investment plans.

5.9 Sample audit sites were selected to ensure a cross section of sites and geographic spread across the area. These sites had also been identified as potential enhancement sites by CDC.

5.10 Sites that have been subject to a quality and value (shown in **Figure 5.2**) audit comprise:

- Adwick Park
- Adwick Road
- Crossfield
- Elmfield Park
- Glasgow Paddocks
- Highfields
- Hills Lane
- Ivanhoe
- Manvers Play Area
- Melton Hill
- Memorial Park
- Quarry Park / St Marys
- Queens Drive
- Recreation Ground

Figure 5.2: Audited sites



- Doncaster boundary
- Neighbouring local authority
- Play area
- 1. Adwick Park
- 2. Adwick Road
- 3. Crossfield
- 4. Elmfield Park
- 5. Glasgow Paddocks
- 6. Highfields
- 7. Hills Lane
- 8. Ivanhoe
- 9. Manvers Play Area
- 10. Melton Hill
- 11. Memorial Park
- 12. Quarry Park / St Marys
- 13. Queens Drive
- 14. Recreation Ground
- 15. Stevensons Drive
- 16. Stirling Street / Milton Street
- 17. Sunderland Street
- 18. Westfield Park



Map scale 1:115,000 @ A3

Chapter 5 Developing an approach to assessing the quality and value of play parks in Doncaster

- Stevensons Drive
- Stirling Street / Milton Walk
- Sunderland Street
- Westfield Park

5.11 The audit results have been compiled to provide a total value score and a total quality score for each site. To allow a comparative analysis and strategic overview of how sites are performing, a percentage (out of 100%) has also been generated for each site based on a total potential score that could be achieved. See Appendix A which includes the site audit form, guidance and scoring methodology. The detailed range of criteria also provides an opportunity to scrutinise the results for individual sites to understand what aspects of a site are performing well or poorly.

5.12 As noted above, the audit is broken down by five key themes:

- **A: Location and design**
(design aspects to encourage users to visit, meet and play with others and feel safe when they are there).
- **B: Added play value**
(to what extent the site enables children of all ages and abilities to engage in imaginative, social and challenging play and engage with the natural environment).
- **C: Specific play affordances / activities**
(the range of specific physical activities and play affordances that the site and equipment makes space for and offers).
- **D: Care and maintenance**
(levels of maintenance and condition of equipment and facilities).
- **E: Other play and sports provision on site**
(the presence and quality of recreation and sports facilities outside of equipped play areas, including features primarily aimed and older children and teenagers).

Chapter 5 Developing an approach to assessing the quality and value of play parks in Doncaster

5.13 A percentage score for each theme also allows a comparison of the relative performance of each site per theme.

Summary of results

Comparative performance of sample sites overall

5.14 As is shown in Table 5.1 below, the performance of sites included within the sample audit was variable, both with regard to total quality and value. The lowest scoring sites for quality included Adwick Road (35%), followed by several sites that scored between 50- 60% including Highfields, Queens Drive, Recreation Ground and Hills Lane. The highest performing site for quality was Elmfield Park (93%).

5.15 The lowest scoring sites for value includes Melton Hill (17%), Ivanhoe (33%), Adwick Road (35%), Highfields(39%) & Crossfield (39%). The highest scoring sites for value include Quarry Park (71%), Westfield Park (71%) and Elmfield Park (67%).

Table 5.1: Sample audit : overall percentage score by theme

Site name	Total Value	Total Quality
Adwick Park	59%	72%
Adwick Road	35%	35%
Crossfield	39%	67%
Elmfield Park	67%	93%
Glasgow Paddocks	48%	62%
Highfields	39%	50%

Chapter 5 Developing an approach to assessing the quality and value of play parks in Doncaster

Site name	Total Value	Total Quality
Hills Lane	49%	58%
Ivanhoe	33%	62%
Manvers Play Area	60%	60%
Melton Hill	17%	60%
Memorial Park	54%	72%
Quarry Park	71%	77%
Queens Drive	41%	55%
Recreation Ground	53%	56%
Stevensons Drive	42%	67%
Stirling Street	61%	64%
Sunderland Street	57%	61%
Westfield Park	71%	71%

5.16 Percentage scores per site by theme provides a strategic overview of which aspects specific sites perform better or worse, see Table 5.2 and Table 5.3.

Table 5.2: Percentage scores by theme (Quality criteria)

Site name	A - Location & design	D - Care & maintenance	E - Other play / sports provision
Adwick Park	80%	63%	73%
Adwick Road	25%	40%	40%
Crossfield	70%	70%	60%
Elmfield Park	85%	100%	93%
Glasgow Paddocks	60%	67%	60%
Highfields	60%	30%	60%
Hills Lane	55%	60%	60%
Ivanhoe	55%	50%	80%
Manvers Play Area	45%	55%	80%
Melton Hill	60%	40%	80%
Memorial Park	80%	57%	80%

Chapter 5 Developing an approach to assessing the quality and value of play parks in Doncaster

Site name	A - Location & design	D - Care & maintenance	E - Other play / sports provision
Quarry Park	70%	80%	80%
Queens Drive	45%	50%	70%
Recreation Ground	60%	55%	53%
Stevensons Drive	60%	60%	80%
Stirling Street	65%	67%	60%
Sunderland Street	50%	50%	84%
Westfield Park	70%	73%	70%

Table 5.3: Percentage scores by theme (Value criteria)

Site name	A - Location & design	B - Added play value	C - Play activities	D - Care & maintenance	E - Other play / sports provision
Adwick Park	67%	55%	36%	100%	40%
Adwick Road	28%	25%	29%	75%	20%
Crossfield	44%	43%	36%	50%	20%
Elmfield Park	67%	78%	64%	25%	100%
Glasgow Paddocks	67%	38%	21%	75%	40%
Highfields	50%	23%	50%	50%	20%
Hills Lane	72%	35%	21%	75%	40%
Ivanhoe	67%	20%	7%	50%	20%
Manvers Play Area	39%	70%	43%	50%	100%
Melton Hill	28%	30%	7%	0%	20%
Memorial Park	83%	30%	21%	75%	60%
Quarry Park	56%	80%	64%	75%	80%
Queens Drive	56%	30%	29%	50%	40%

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Site name	A - Location & design	B - Added play value	C - Play activities	D - Care & maintenance	E - Other play / sports provision
Recreation Ground	67%	55%	36%	50%	60%
Stevensons Drive	61%	38%	43%	50%	20%
Stirling Street	50%	63%	14%	100%	80%
Sunderland Street	61%	45%	43%	75%	60%
Westfield Park	78%	60%	64%	75%	80%

5.17 Once a full audit of all sites has been undertaken the relative quality and value performance of each site can be cross referenced with other data such as accessibility, health and deprivation data and proximity to residential areas and other community facilities. This process will help identify sites for enhancement and inform a process of strategic rationalisation of play parks across individual neighbourhood areas or wards.

Summary of key findings by theme

5.18 The following section provides a summary of results from a range of criteria within each theme in order to identify any strong or re-curing key issues and opportunities for enhancement across the sample audit. The key findings are also used to inform a strategic action plan and design principles.

A: Location and design

5.19 This theme focuses on the location and design of the play park (and wider open space where applicable) as a key factor in determining the success of a play park and how likely it is to be used. Scoring is based on the follow criteria.

- Informal oversight

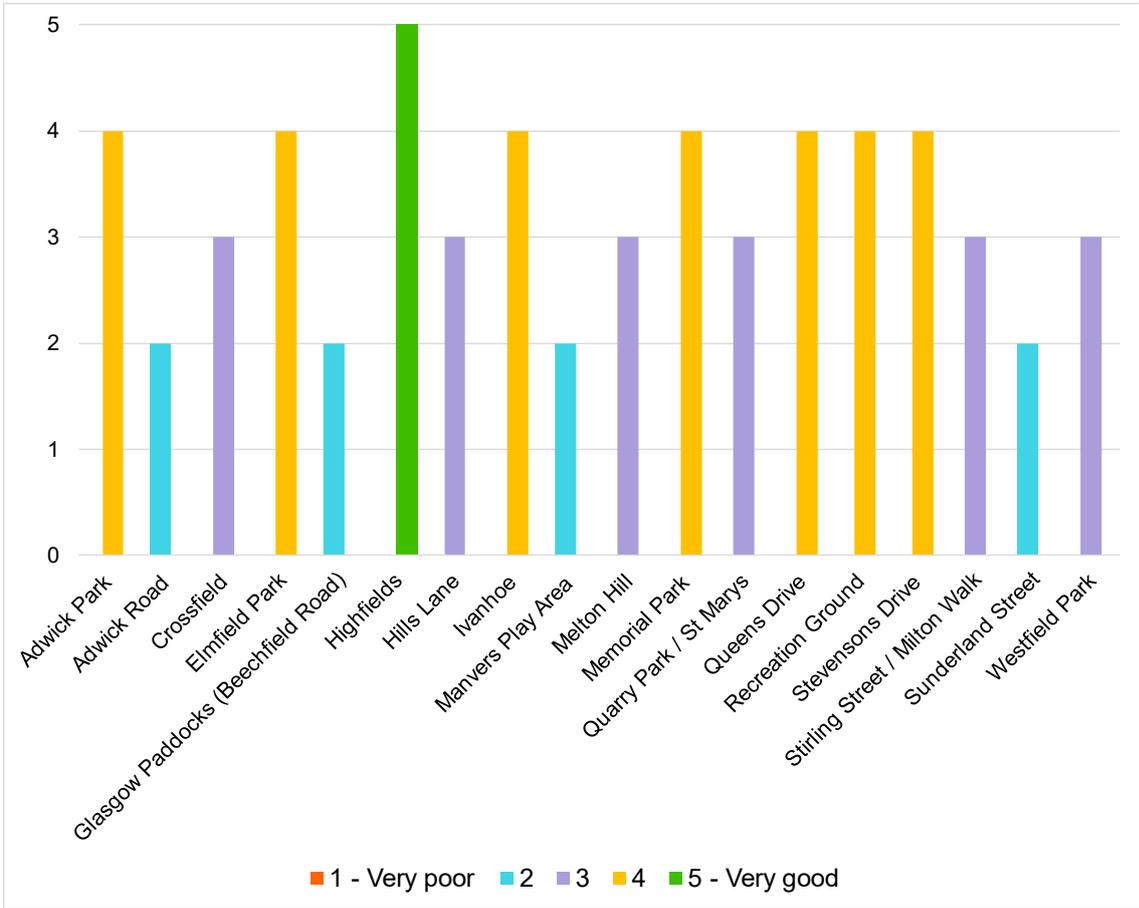
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- Well used by children (this was difficult to assess on a single site visit and so has been excluded from the scoring)
- Getting there & for those with disabilities
- Sense of safety and security
- Meeting other children
- Designed for the site
- Is the site fenced? (not scored)
- Seating for adults
- Toilets / changing facilities
- Cycle / scooter parking
- Is there car parking? (not scored)

5.20 Informal oversight can affect sense of safety and security. Poor informal oversight from walking and cycling routes, roads residential properties or passers by may put off some children, parents or carers from using a site altogether or at certain times of day. The overall level of footfall going through a site will affect the overall levels of natural surveillance. A play park within an open space with facilities and amenities for a wide range of users, or that is used as pedestrian through route, will generally have higher levels of natural surveillance. The sample audit found that over half of sites audited had limited informal oversight, scoring poor to fair on this criterion. Sites that scored lower overall when compared to other sites in the sample audit included Adwick Road, Glasgow Paddocks, Manvers Play Area, see Figure 5.3: Informal oversight (Q)

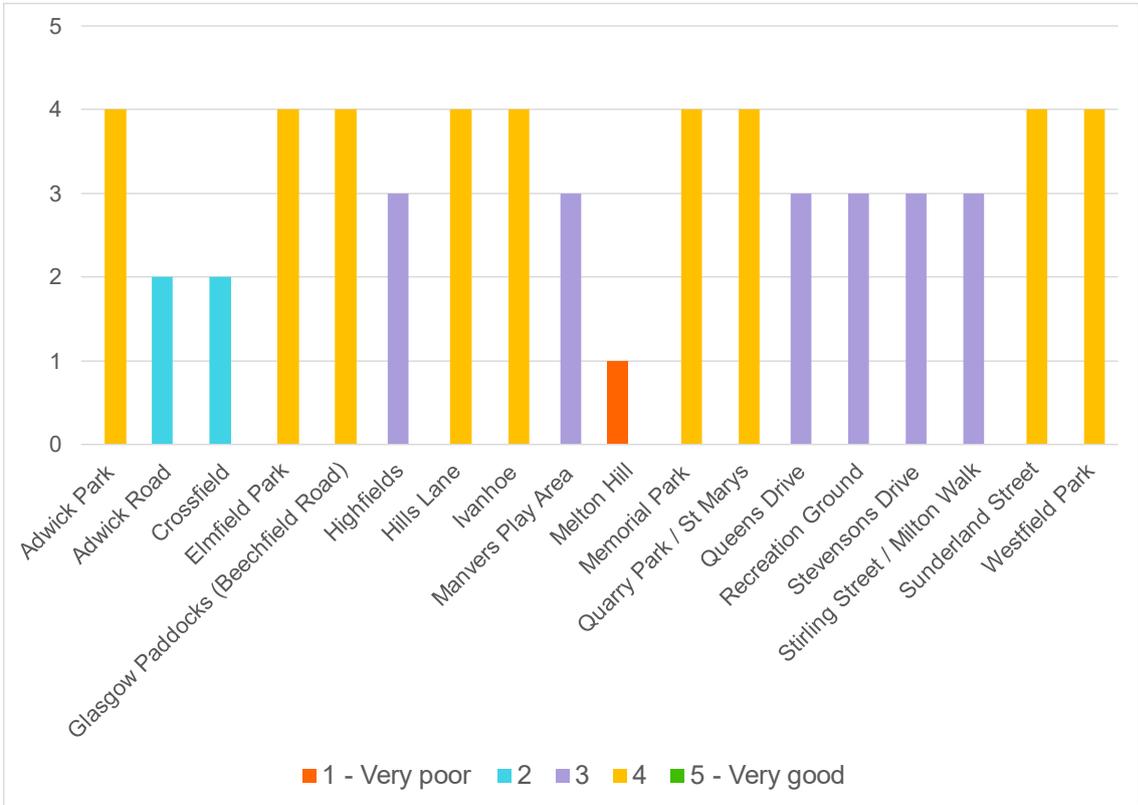
5.21 Good natural surveillance is one of many factors that should be taken into account when locating play, and therefore should be considered during a process of rationalising sites or consolidating provision to a reduced number of sites in a neighbourhood area to enhance provision.

Figure 5.3: Informal oversight (Q)



5.22 Sites were scored against the criteria ‘getting there’ and ‘getting there for those with impairments, buggies and push chairs’. This considers the ease of access to play parks (both access to the wider open space and access within the open space). This considered overall factors such as parking, public transport links (e.g. bus stops conveniently located nearby) and crossings at busy roads etc. The tables below indicates that sites generally scored ‘fair’ to ‘good’ overall on ‘getting there. The lower scoring sites for this criterion include Adwick Road, Crossfield and Melton Hill, see Figure 5.4.

Figure 5.4: Getting there (access to the site / barriers to access) (V)



5.23 Getting there for those with impairments, buggies and pushchairs’ reflects the overall quality of access within and through a site, including access to the play park from entrances or car parks etc. Provision of some form of surfaced or firm, level access to and between play equipment was also considered. Sites often fell short on ‘getting there for those with impairments, buggies and pushchairs’ due to a number of factors including:

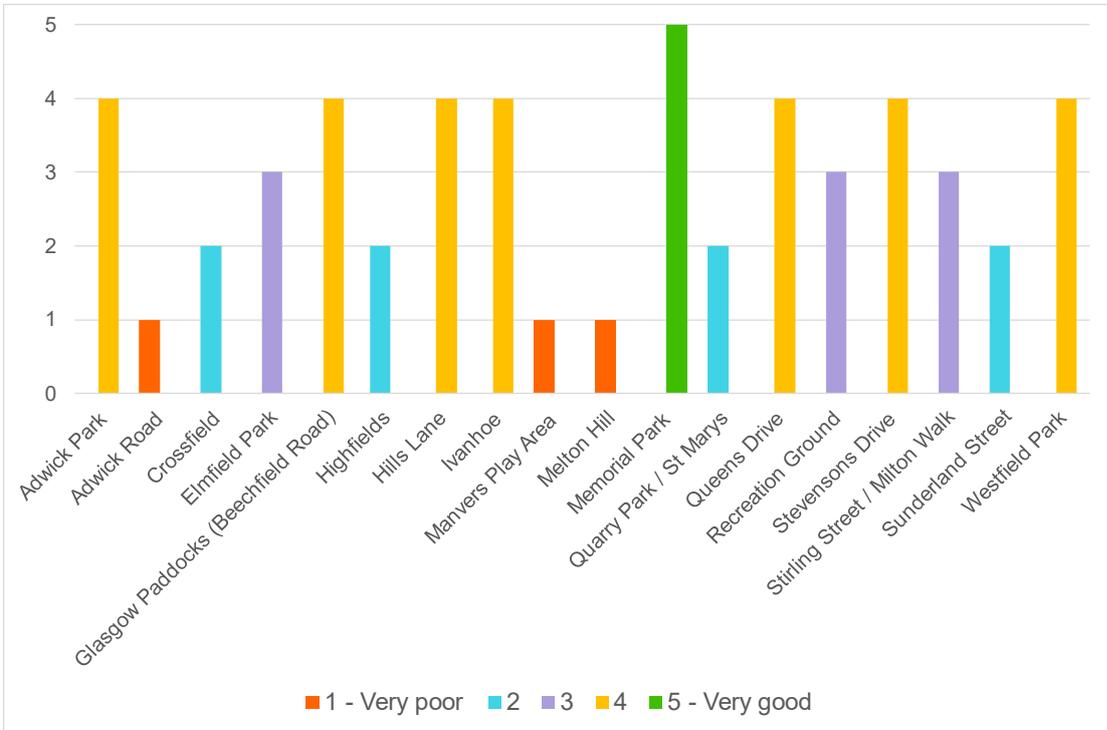
- No surfaced paths to or from the play park.
- Uneven or stepped thresholds between different surfacing on the route to the play park.
- Uneven or degraded surfacing in some locations making the journey more challenging.
- Entrances to the open space or play park not well located.

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- Narrow paths that wouldn't be able to accommodate a pushchair or wheel chair, especially in poor weather.
- Steep topography / landform.

5.24 Lower scoring sites for this criterion include Adwick Road, Manvers Play Area, Melton Hill, Crossfield and Highfield, see Figure 5.5.

Figure 5.5: Getting there for those with impairments or with buggies and pushchairs (V)

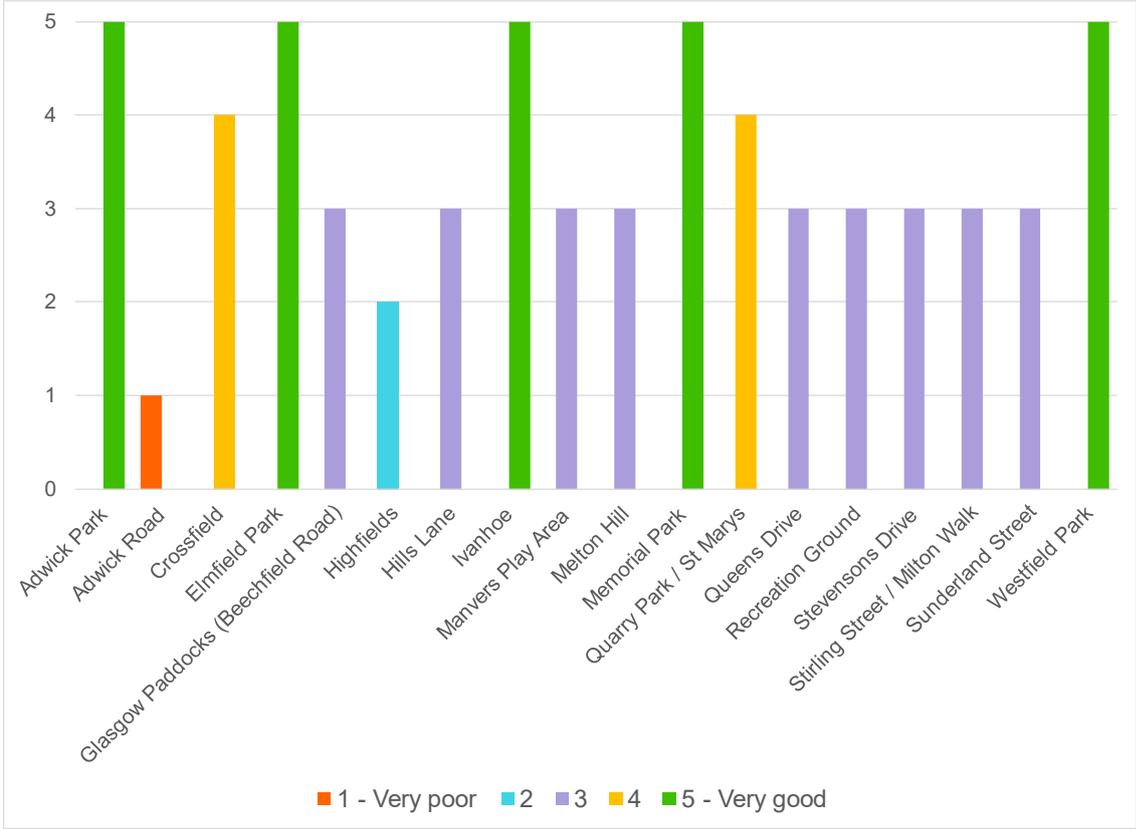


5.25 The audit found that the sense of safety and security within audited play parks and the surrounding open spaces was generally fair, although several sites were noted to have ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ sense of safety and security . Sites recorded as ‘very good’ include Elmfield Park, Memorial Park and Westfield Park, see Figure 6.2. Sense of safety and security can be influenced by a range of factors including types of entrances (e.g. whether narrow or open), clear sightlines, levels of pedestrian traffic / general levels of use of the site, nearby facilities, levels of maintenance, vandalism and graffiti. The results also reflect

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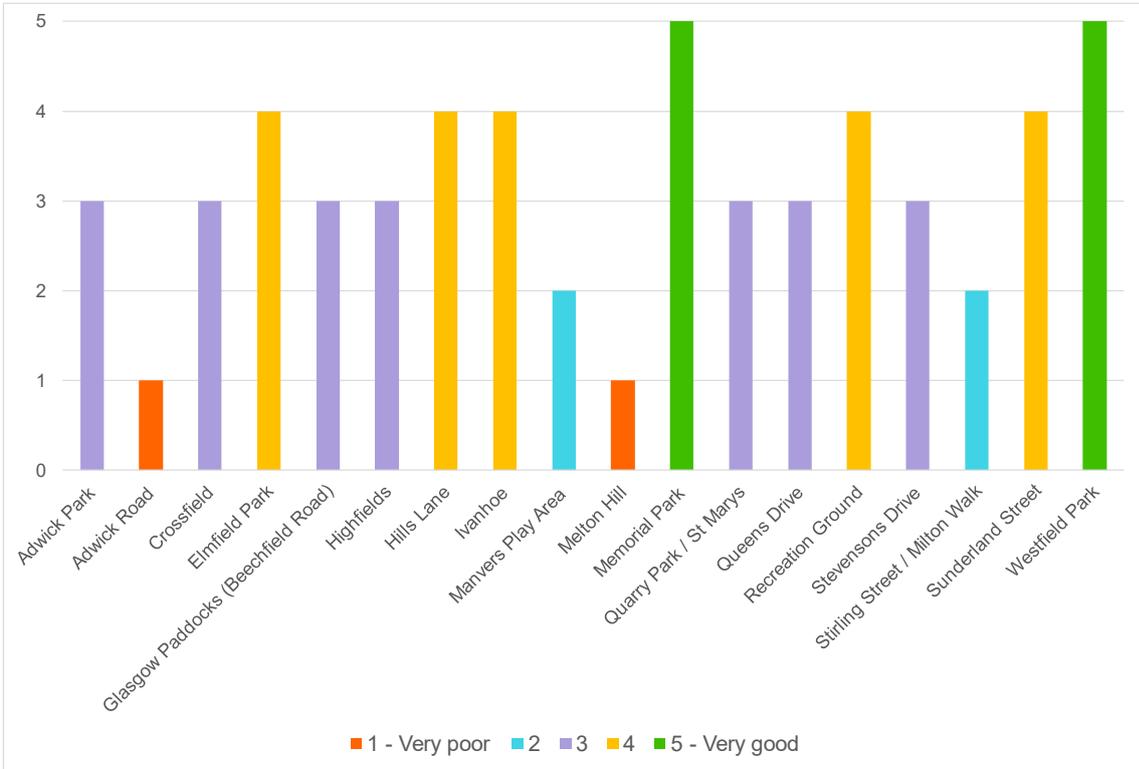
the general feeling of safety from a site based on location (i.e. is the site isolated or at a dead end). Sense of safety may be enhanced via several means such as through the provision of additional lighting, vegetation management, enhancement of entrances or provision of new entrances.

Figure 5.6: Sense of safety and security (Q)



5.26 Sites audited mostly scored ‘fair’ or ‘good’ for meeting other children (Figure 5.7). Higher scoring sites were located close to local facilities, schools or could be seen from main roads or paths. Adwick Road and Melton Hill scored very poorly for this criterion. Both were located away from residences or facilities.

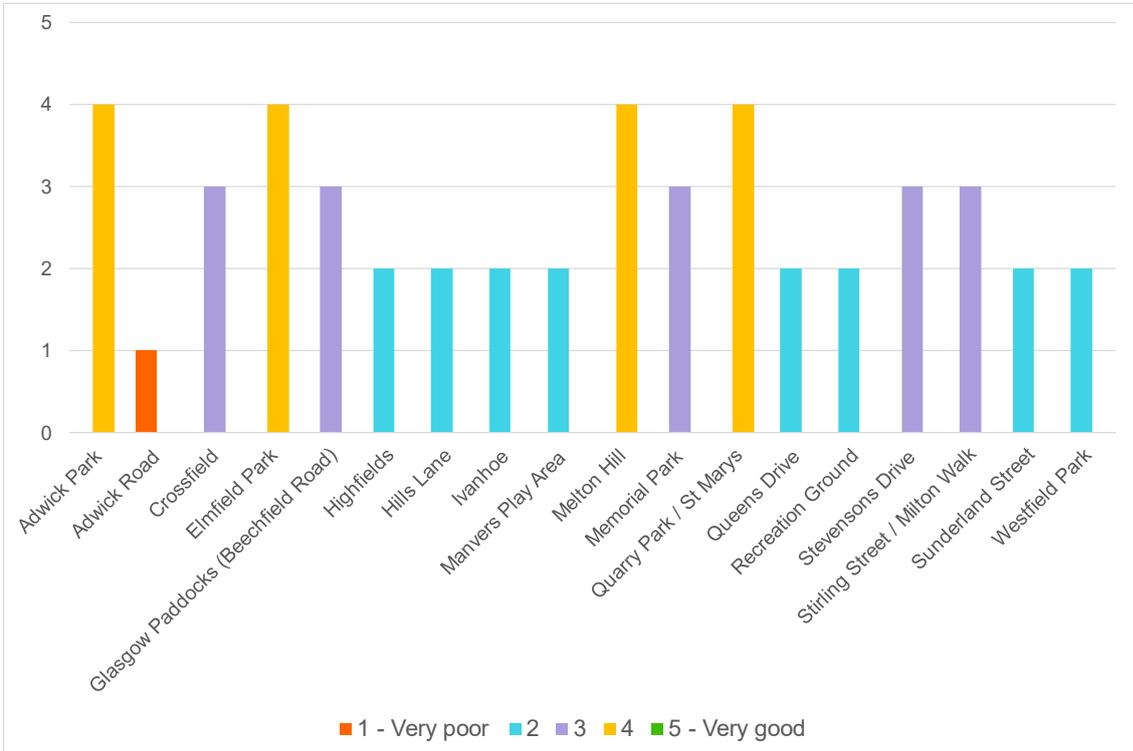
Figure 5.7: Meeting other children



5.27 The sample audit found that play parks were generally not well integrated into the site or well designed for the site. Sites were generally scored very poor to fair on this criterion with no sites being scored ‘very good’, see Figure 5.8.

5.28 This criterion takes account of whether efforts have been made to make the play park attractive, appealing and to complementary to the surroundings. This includes factors such as the placement of the play park and whether the overall layout and choice of materials is consistent, boundary treatments, and whether the design responds to the surrounding landscape (for instance integrating play opportunities into the natural topography etc.). Play parks that are well integrated into the wider open space and setting will generally be more inviting and encourage children and their carers to use a site and will be more likely to stay for an extended period of time. Sites that are well designed for the site can also take advantage of and incorporate natural features and site characteristics to encourage exploration and interaction with the natural environment.

Figure 5.8: Designed for the site (Q)



Key priorities: location and design

- Improve and ensure good sense of safety and security through maintaining clear site lines / vegetation management etc. It may be appropriate to prioritise sites with good natural surveillance from residential properties / areas of activity for enhancement over sites where there is little or no opportunity to enhance natural surveillance.
- Improve access for all users, buggies and wheelchair access, considering access to play parks from within a wider open space. This should take account of all routes to the play park, surfacing width, types and thresholds.
- Improve the provision of ancillary facilities such as seating to ensure this is well placed for supervision. Materials will need to be robust but ideally fit in with the overall design of the site.
- Ensure enhancements (or new play parks) make efforts to integrate play facilities into the wider open space. This may be achieved through

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appropriate boundary treatments, choice of consistent materials, and additional low maintenance planting (such as small trees) nearby to mark out play zones.

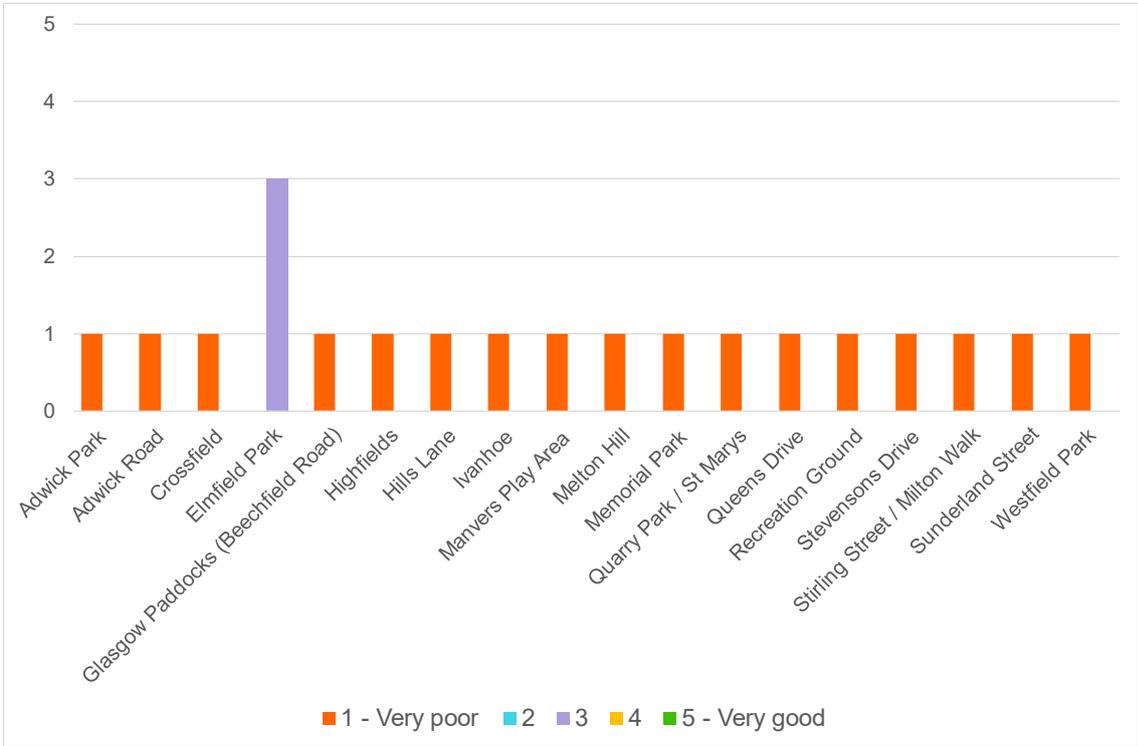
B: Added play value

5.29 This theme looks at the wider characteristics and features of the play park and surrounding site that add value and provide a richer play experience for all users. Scoring is based on the following criteria.

- Enticing children to play
- Inclusion of opportunities for those with disabilities
- Play needs of different ages
- Imaginative play types
- Encouraging social play
- Access to the natural environment
- Challenging / exciting play
- Encouraging teenage play

5.30 Play parks that were included as part of the audit were found to perform very poorly on providing play opportunities for those with disabilities, with almost all sites scoring 1 'very poor' on this criteria, see Figure 5.9. Whilst specific needs and barriers to use are very varied, this audit focussed on the presence of play equipment specifically intended to be inclusive. A key principle of inclusive play opportunities is also enabling social and interactive play amongst all children using the equipment and play park, which can partly be addressed through the selection of equipment and facilities, and the design of the site overall. This may include wheelchair accessible roundabouts, bucket swings / buddy swings, equipment with wheelchair transfer platforms & sensory play features etc.

Figure 5.9: Inclusion of play opportunities for children with disabilities (V)



5.31 This theme also considered the age suitability of play equipment and the range of ages catered for. As discussed under play type categorisation, age ranges related to play facilities are generally grouped as follows: under 5s, 5-11 and 11+. The audit found that most sites were catering for a limited range of ages on one site, see Figure 5.10. Whilst there may at time be justified reason to provide spaces that provide play opportunities for one age group (for instance under 5s), there are also potential limitations and disbenefits including limited mixed opportunities for siblings during a family visit to a site, limited opportunities for mixed age play and opportunities for younger kids to push their abilities on more challenging equipment.

Sites were scored on the basis of the following:

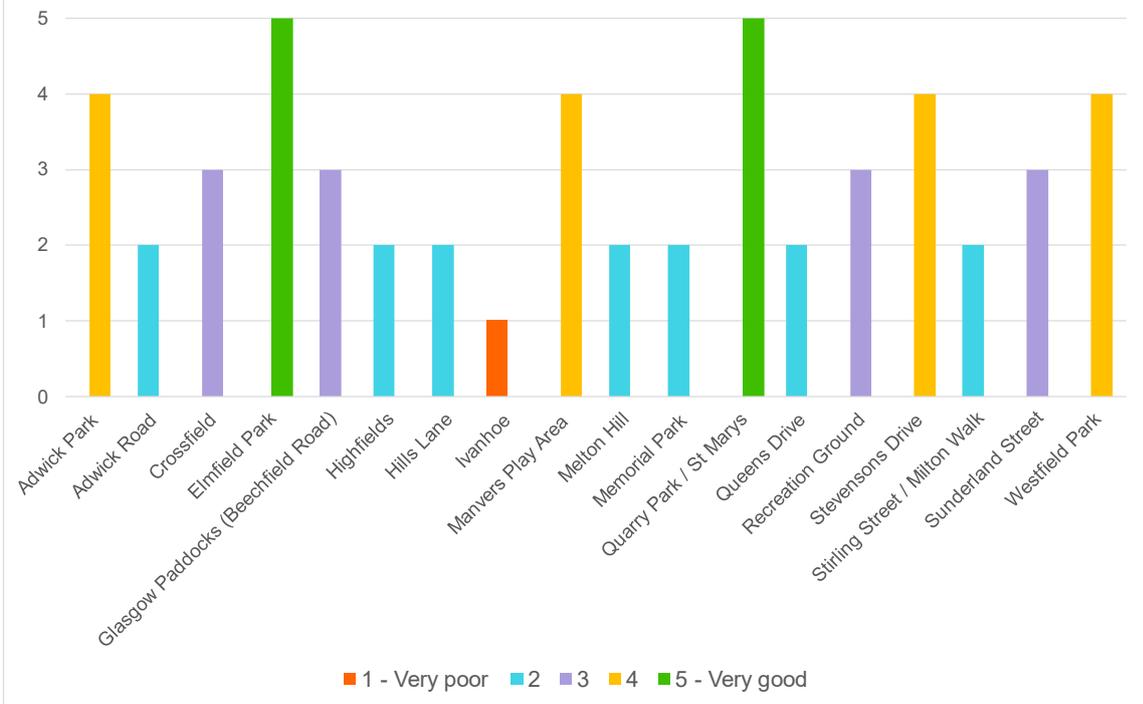
- 1: Features meet the play needs of only one age group.
- 3: Play features suitable for two different age groups, or all three but to a limited extent for each.

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- 5: Play features highly likely to meet the play needs of all ages including teenagers.

5.32 Sites scoring ‘2’ or ‘4’ were considered borderline between the guidance set out above. It should be noted for the sites that were audited, play opportunities for teenagers was generally provided by MUGAs, basketball courts, areas for football or skate parks. For most of the sites visited, more challenging pieces of play equipment for older children and teenagers were not a key feature or not present at all.

Figure 5.10: Play needs of different ages (V)



5.33 The audit found that the design of sites and choice of equipment generally did not promote or encourage imaginative play or provide opportunities for challenging or exciting play. Potential features and characteristics that may encourage imaginative play are wide reaching and may include:

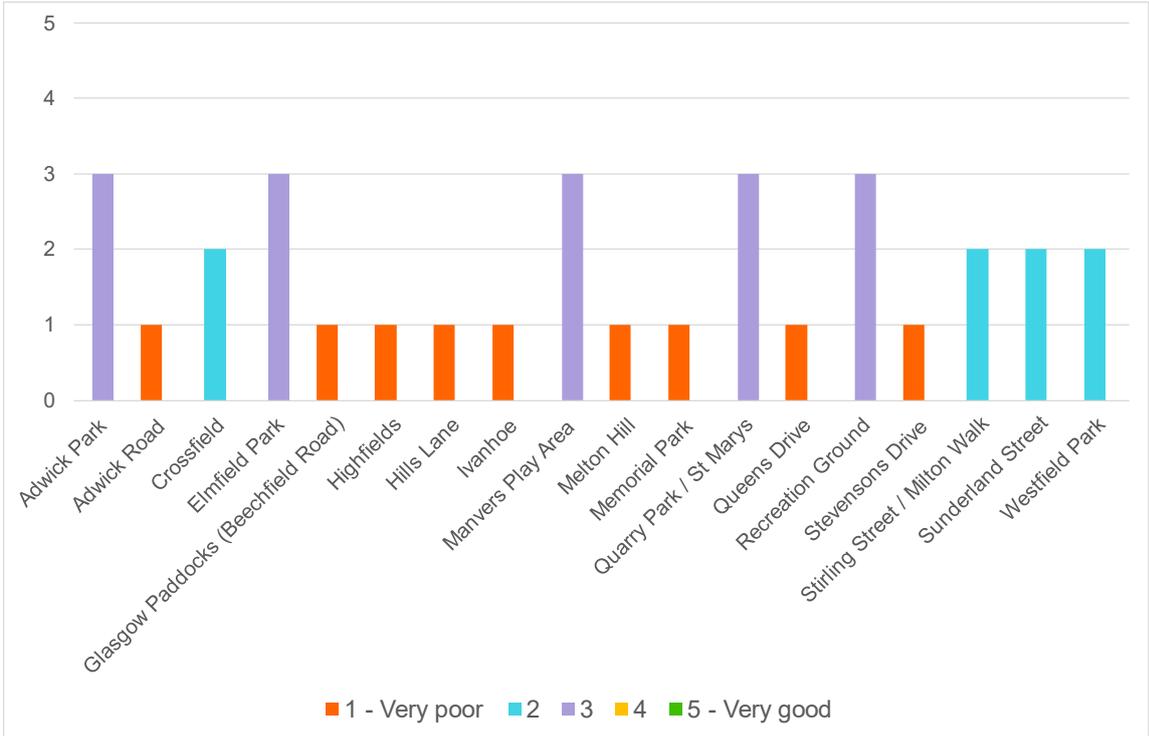
- Themed equipment or play parks such as boats / pirate ship, castle, space ship / train etc.

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- Features that suggest use as cafes / houses etc. to encourage role play / make believe games.
- Loose parts / moveable features that encourage creativity and use of the imagination (such as sand pit areas, den building, water play).

5.34 The majority of sites scored as ‘very poor’ or ‘poor’ for imaginative play types, with no sites identified as ‘good’ on this criteria, see Figure 5.11. This criterion overlaps to a certain degree with ‘encouraging social play’ which looks at opportunities for children to meet, socialise and interact.

Figure 5.11: Imaginative play types / stretching the imagination (V)



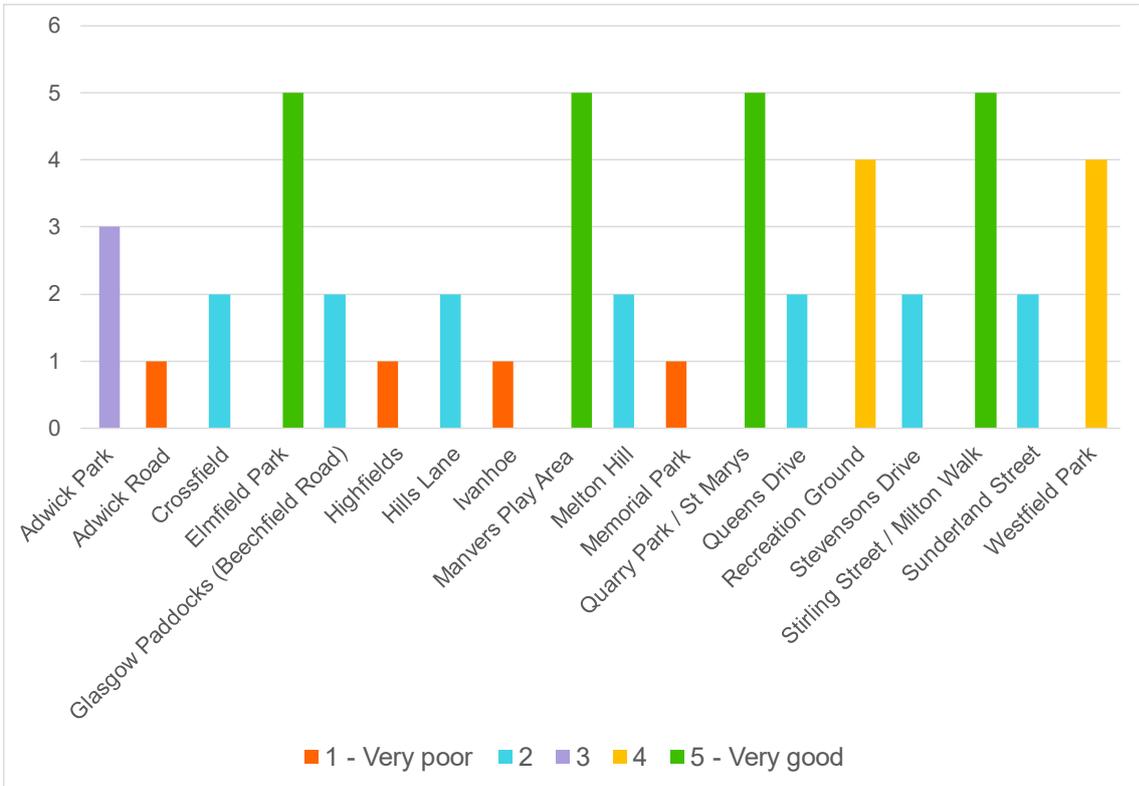
5.35 Equipped play facilities were generally found to have very little to specifically encourage social play. This may include suitable children’s seating areas, house-type features, or play features that specifically encourage team playing / games (specifically as part of equipped play space). Requirements for encouraging social play will differ depending on age groups, with younger

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children more likely to socialise through imaginative games and make believe, or playing separate activities together in the same location. The provision of different types of seating, ‘performance’ space to hang out and areas for informal sport will generally be more important for older children and teenagers.

5.36 Six sites that were included within the sample audit scored ‘good’ or ‘very good’ on this criteria, with most other sites scoring ‘very poor’ or ‘poor’, see Figure 5.12.

Figure 5.12: Encouraging social play (V)

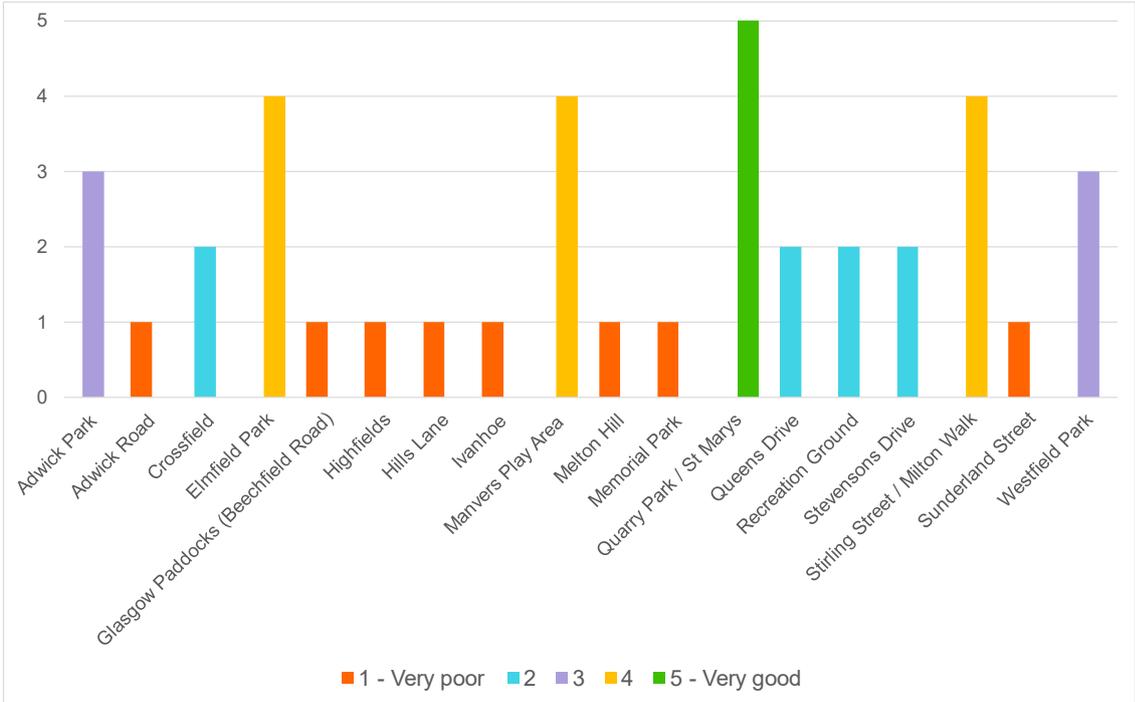


5.37 What is considered challenging / exciting play will vary depending on the age and abilities of the user. Assessing sites for this criterion focussed on the presence of equipment that provides added challenge for specific age groups. This could range from swinging bridges, rope / chain climbing features, climbing grips, obstacle course, challenging climbing or balancing trails at varying heights. This could include mixed activity structures with a ‘challenge’ and ‘reward’ such as a challenging climbing wall or rope course to reach a large

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slide. Sites generally scored ‘very poor’ or ‘poor’ on this criterion, with only a small number of sites scored as ‘good’, see Figure 5.13.

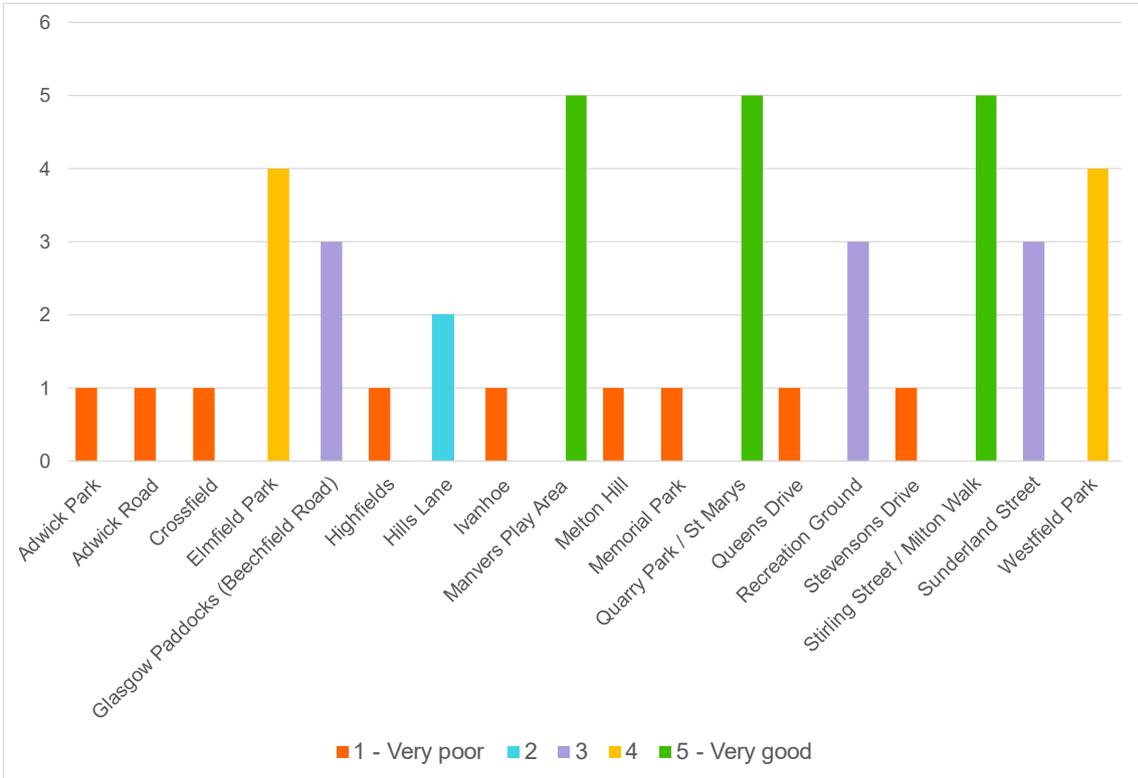
Figure 5.13: Challenging / exciting play (V)



C

5.38 Of the sites that were audited only a few were noted to have good or very good characteristics or features for encouraging teenage play, see Figure 5.14. This generally reflects the lack of larger, more challenging, equipped facilities aimed at older children. Other facilities aimed at older children (which were generally MUGAs and skate areas) were often found to be good condition, although may not be welcoming for all users due to fencing, location and a lack of multifunctionality (i.e. dominance of areas for football / balls sports) and lack of well placed, welcoming social space and seating areas.

Figure 5.14: Encouraging teenage play (V)



5.39 The audit found that there were generally limited opportunities to encourage or provide access and interaction with the natural environment, with most sites scoring ‘fair’ or ‘poor’ on this criteria, see Figure 5.15.

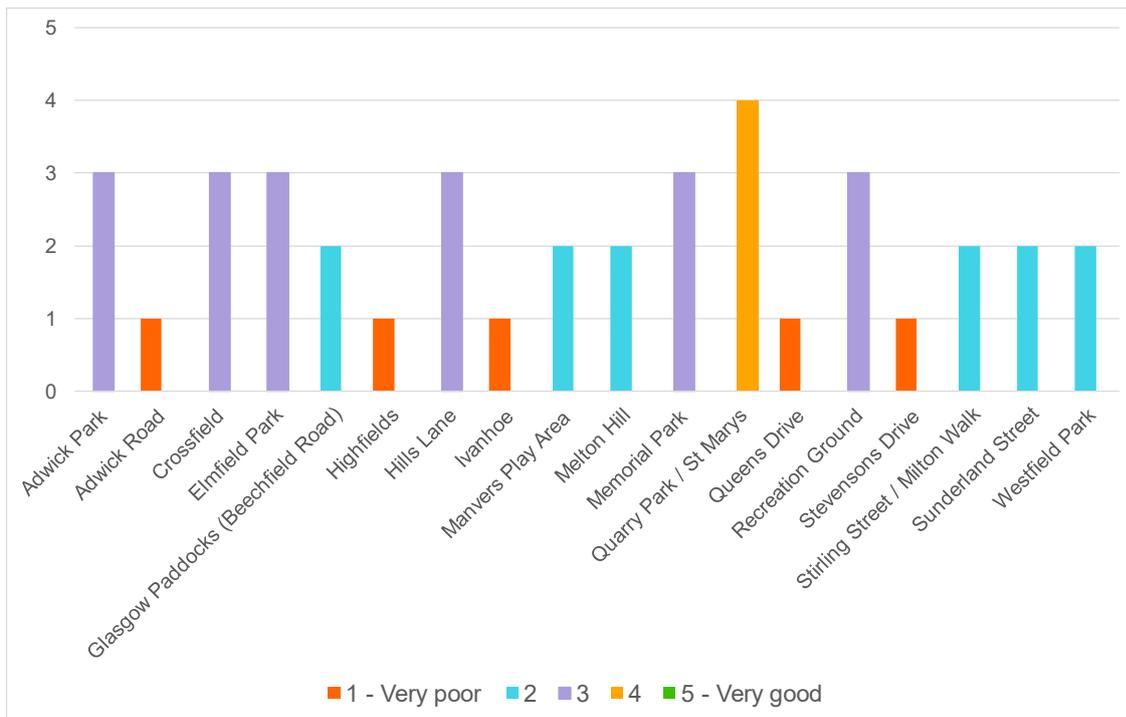
5.40 Access to the natural environment as part of play provision can be promoted in a wide range of ways, such as through incorporating planting, areas of grass and natural features such as boulders form clambering and jumping, and access to loose natural materials such as sand. Routes through natural areas such as woodland, tree planting and long grassland could also be used to link entrances to more formal equipped play facilities.

5.41 Sites that were included within the sample audit generally do not incorporate planting or natural features as part of fenced equipped play areas. Quarry Park / St Marys was scored as ‘good’ as a result of several characteristics and features including play equipment incorporated within the wider landscape, opportunities to explore and interact with the natural

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topography (running up and down slopes etc.), areas of sand within equipped play areas, areas of trees near play areas and associated seating.

Figure 5.15: Access to the natural environment (V)



Key priorities: added play value

- Improve access within and through open spaces to ensure good access for all, including wheelchair users, those with mobility issues and those using buggies and pushchairs.
- Increase the range of inclusive equipment, including wheelchair accessible equipment and features and areas for those with additional sensory, mobility, cognitive or emotional needs.
- Ensure equipment and site design promotes inclusive social play amongst all age groups and abilities.
- Increase equipment and other play opportunities that are challenging and promote imaginative play.

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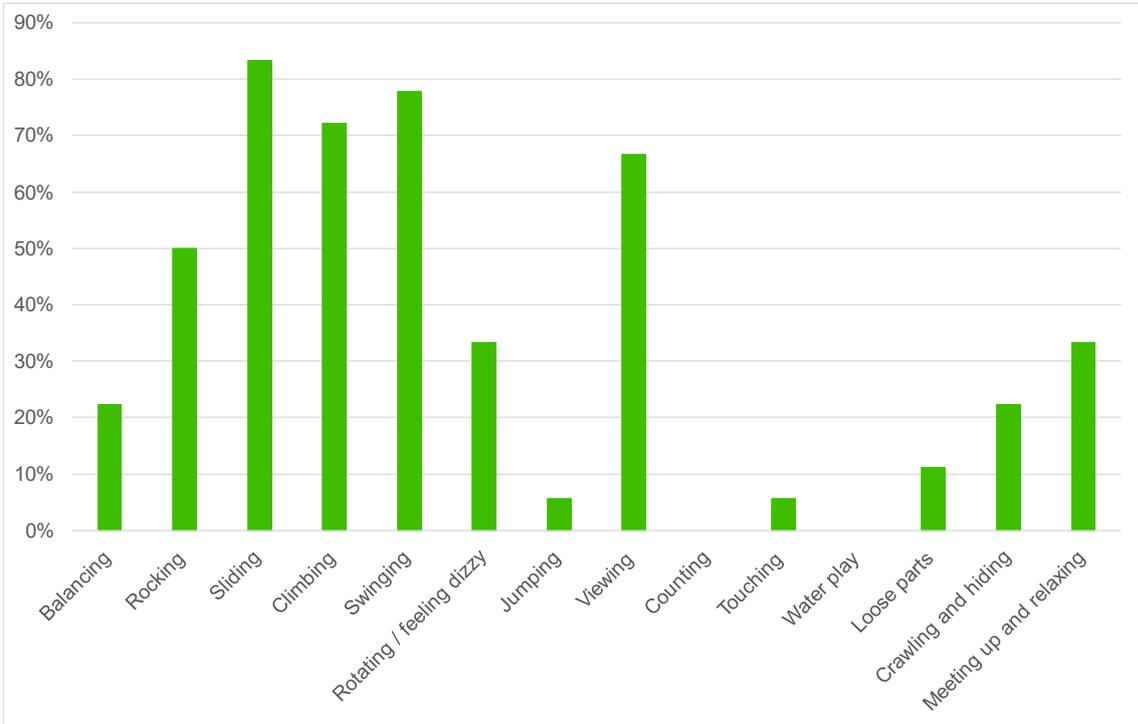
- Consider the wider setting of the site and opportunities to access and interact with natural features, whether within equipped play areas, or by providing 'cues' to explore wider natural areas (signage, informal routes, trails, long grass with mown paths).
- Enhance areas with teenage focussed provision to provide more welcoming multifunctional / multiuse areas with suitable seating, areas for hanging out and provide more multifunctional areas.

C: Specific play affordances

5.42 This theme looks at the range of distinct types of play activities or affordances available on a site. This approach looks beyond counting the number of pieces of equipment and also looks beyond fenced play areas at what other opportunities may be available (such as informal play opportunities provided in the wider surrounding open space).

5.43 Recording the range of activities and play affordances on offer provides the opportunity to identify what features and equipment could be incorporated to increase the variety, interest and additional types of physical activity that could be encouraged. Of the audited sites, a large proportion offer opportunities for offer opportunities for sliding, climbing, swinging and viewing (e.g. viewing from an elevated platform). Opportunities were seen less frequently for all other activities including balancing, rocking, rotating, jumping, crawling hiding meeting up, relaxing. See Figure 5.16. However, it should be noted that this criterion does not consider opportunities for ball games / sports (e.g. provision of MUGAs / tennis), or cycling / skating (e.g. skate parks) etc.

Figure 5.16: Play activities / affordances



5.44 Table 5.4 sets out the results of this criterion by site. The number of play activities / affordances provided by site varies significantly. In some instances, this is as a result of play equipment having been previously removed and not replaced. Several sites only had one or two types of activity provided for (e.g. Melton Hill / Ivanhoe). Sites with the widest range of activities on offer compared to other sites includes Elmfield Park, Quarry Park & Westfield Park.

Key priorities: specific play affordances

- Use a checklist of activities and affordances when developing play enhancement proposals, aiming to incorporate equipment that is multifunctional – providing a wide range of play affordances / activities.
- Where possible, incorporate additional simple and low cost interventions (in addition to providing purpose built equipment) to increase the range of play affordances on site. This may incorporating land forming / mounds (e.g. for rolling, hiding, viewing, jumping), incorporation of rocks / boulders (e.g. for climbing, balancing), or retaining felled tree trunks where safe and

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suitable (e.g. for climbing / balancing). Floor markings could also be considered in and around defined play zones. This may include snakes and ladders, 'road markings', hopscotch, number games (e.g. for jumping, counting, touch, social play etc.).

- Consider focussing resources on a smaller number of sites to provide destination sites with a wider range of activities which will likely encourage longer visits and a wider range of physical activity.
- As identified under the criterion 'encouraging social play', provide places for children to engage in social play activities and relax with friends. Such as through the provision of children's seating, features to recline & inside / outside play (e.g. play dens / 'houses' etc.)
- Use community consultation and engagement to guide the types of activities that should be provided, whilst recognising that a wider variety of activities will always add value to a play area and cater for a wider range of users.

Table 5.4: Specific play affordances per site

Site name	Balance	Rock	Slide	Climb	Swing	Rotate	Jump	View	Count	Touch	Water play	Loose parts	Crawl and hide	Meet up, relax
Adwick Park	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-
Adwick Road	-	-	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-
Crossfield	-	-	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓	-	-	-	✓	-	-
Elmfield Park	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	✓
Glasgow Paddocks	-	✓	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Highfields	-	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	-
Hills Lane	-	-	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

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Site name	Balance	Rock	Slide	Climb	Swing	Rotate	Jump	View	Count	Touch	Water play	Loose parts	Crawl and hide	Meet up, relax
Ivanhoe	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Manvers Play Area	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	✓
Melton Hill	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Memorial Park	✓	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Quarry Park	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	-	✓	-	✓	-	✓
Queens Drive	-	-	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-
Recreation Ground	-	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	✓
Stevensons Drive	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	-
Stirling Street	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓

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Site name	Balance	Rock	Slide	Climb	Swing	Rotate	Jump	View	Count	Touch	Water play	Loose parts	Crawl and hide	Meet up, relax
Sunderland Street	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-
Westfield Park	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	✓

D: Care and maintenance

5.45 This theme covers the overall maintenance and condition of the site and provision of basic facilities / amenities (e.g. litter bins). The theme includes the following criteria:

- Well maintained (overall condition of play area)
- Health and safety
- Impact absorbing equipment
- Litter Bins
- Play area notice & no smoking sign

5.46 The overall appearance of being well maintained varied across the sites, with most sites scoring 'fair' to 'good'. However, a number sites were recorded as 'poor', with Highfields recorded as 'very poor', see Figure 5.17. The majority of sites were surfaced with impact absorbing material either across the whole of the fenced area, or around specific pieces of equipment. Impact absorbing equipment was generally recorded as 'fair'. Where recorded as poor, this was generally as a result of a build of detritus or moss in places, although some areas were noted to be degraded or lifting up (e.g. Highfields), see Figure 5.18.

Issues were associated with:

- Ageing equipment with paint wearing off.
- Features missing if they have been removed for health and safety reasons.
- Litter was recorded in several play parks and the cavities beneath dog control grilles were acting as litter traps.
- Degraded and ageing safety surfacing, some of which has been patched up multiple times.

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Figure 5.17: Is the site well maintained? (overall condition of play equipment / litter) (Q)

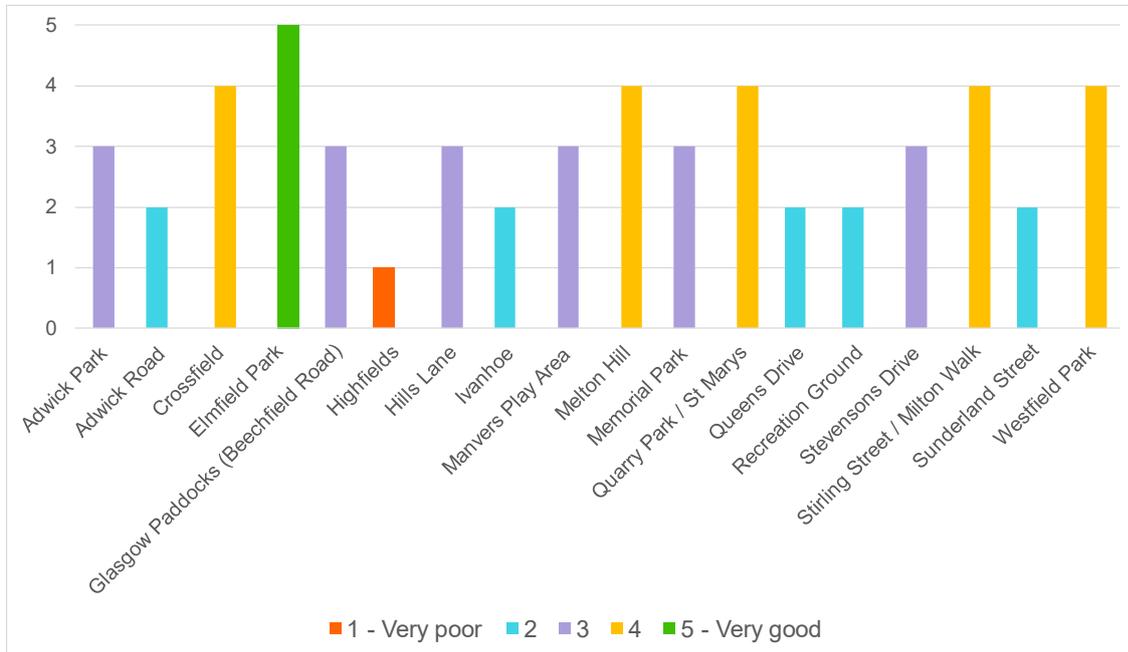
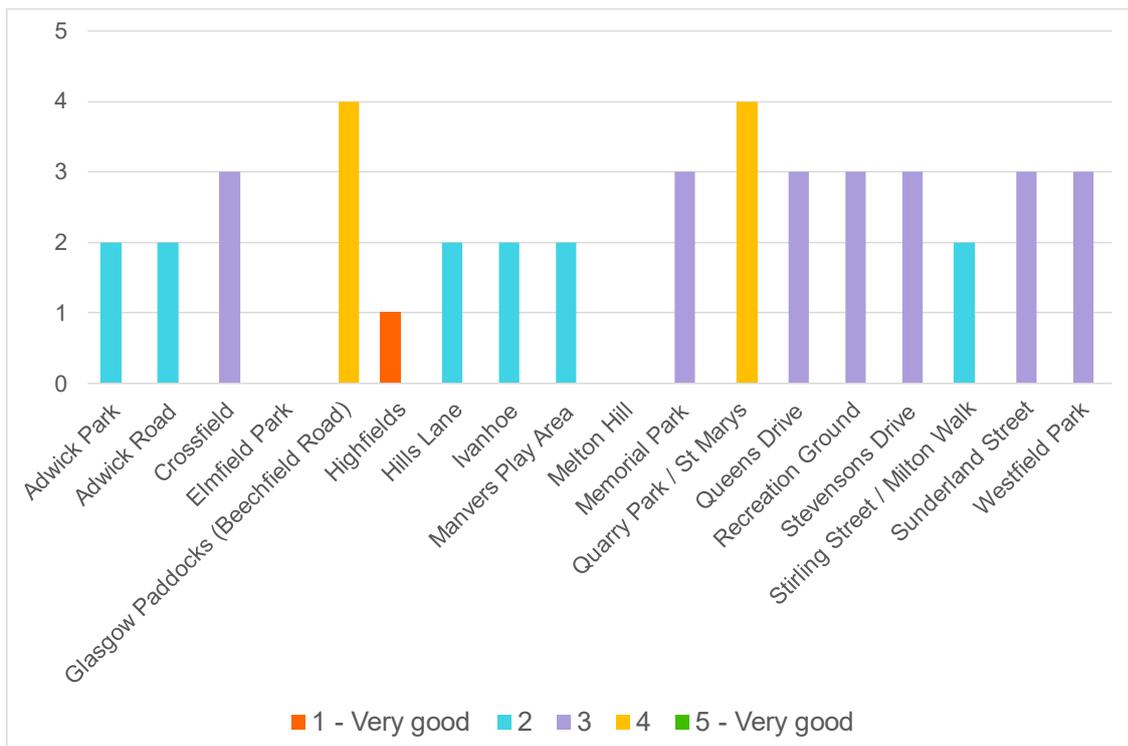


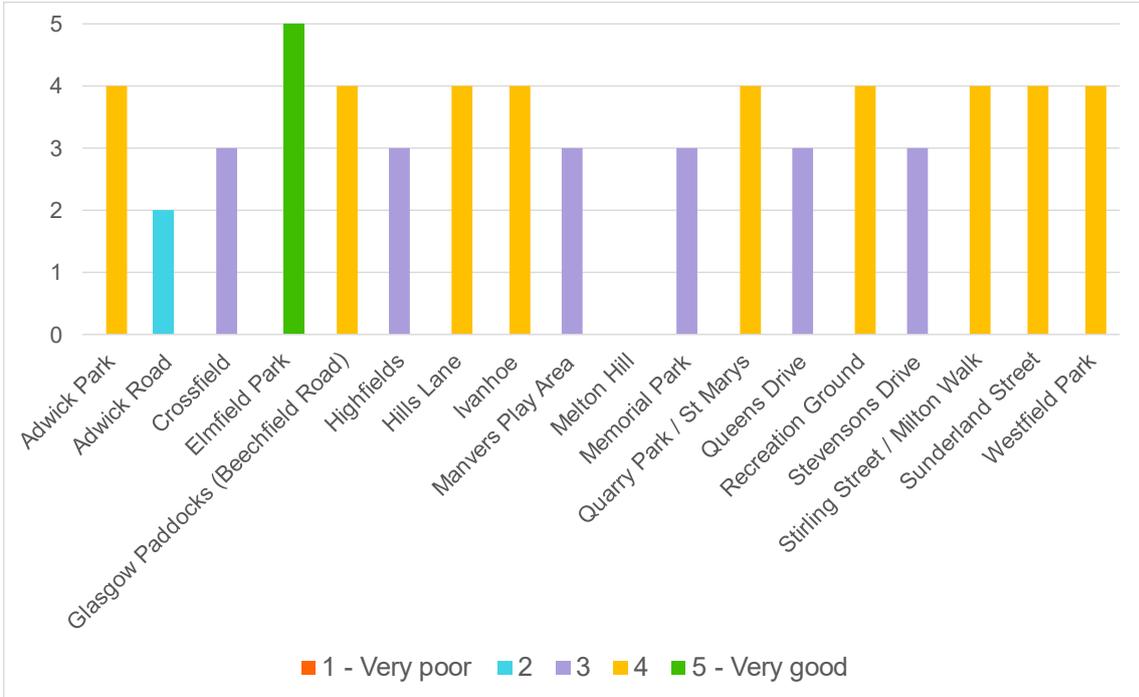
Figure 5.18: Condition of impact absorbing surfacing (Q)



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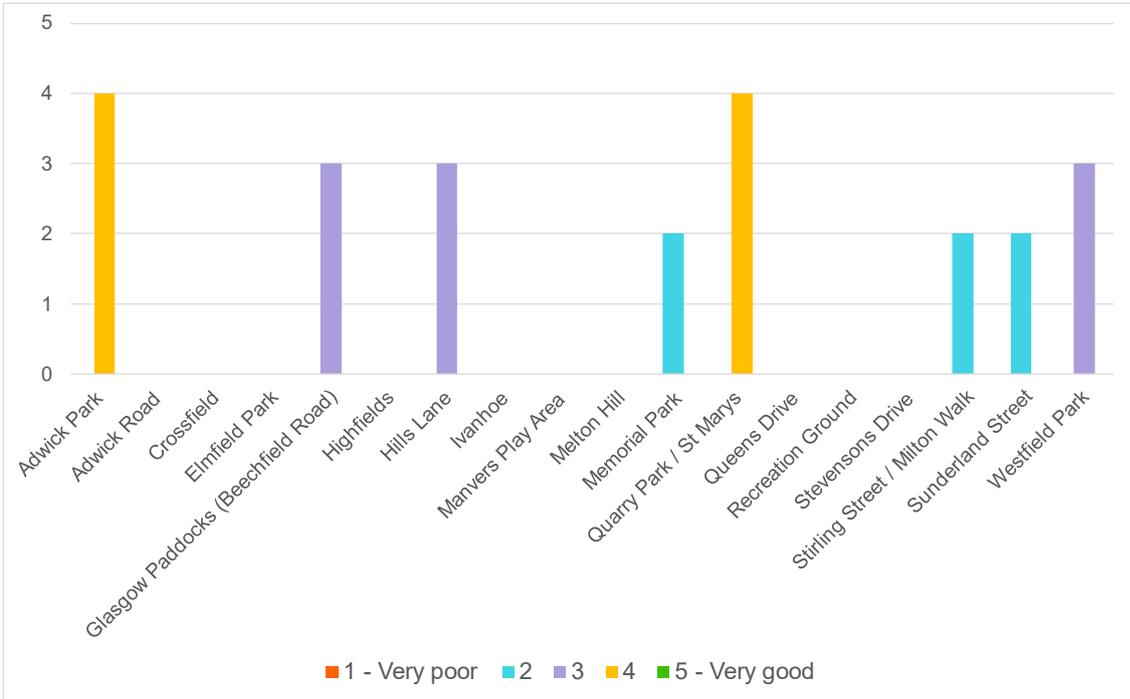
5.47 Litter bins were recorded at most sites, with the majority in and a 'good' or 'fair' condition, see Figure 5.19.

Figure 5.19: Condition / quality of litter bins (Q)



5.48 Over half the play parks did not include signage specifically associated with the equipped play areas (either at the entrance, within the play park, or directional signage to the play park). Where present, signage was generally in 'fair' to 'poor' condition, see Figure 5.20.

Figure 5.20: Quality / condition of play areas notices (does it state: dog free, children only, emergency contacts) (Q)



Key priorities: care and maintenance

- A number of pieces of equipment have been de-commissioned (e.g. swing sets with swings removed) or are old and ‘tired’ (e.g. with paint peeling off etc, degraded surfacing). Implement a clear process of when to re-invest in a site or when it would be more appropriate to remove sites and focus resources on developing a smaller number of better quality sites within a neighbourhood.
- Remove / design out features which increase the maintenance burden on sites. This could include removing / filling in dog ‘grilles’, which are not always effective and act as a litter ‘trap’.
- Where possible, extending hard surfacing / safety surfacing slightly beyond play area boundary fences (to reduce the need to spray off grass around the perimeter of sites).
- Ensure all new play parks or enhancement schemes incorporate suitable play area signage. Signage should ideally have a consistent design across

the sites, be well located at an appropriate height and meet accessibility standards (with regard to font size etc.). As a minimum, signage should include play area name, emergency contact numbers, a dog free sign and no smoking sign. Inclusion of other information such as nearby locations / sites which provide other types of facilities that are not provided on the site may also be beneficial (e.g. nearest MUGA or skate park.), or a QR code to other CDC online play park, open space or sport information.

E: Other play / sports provision on site

5.49 This theme assesses the provision of features and opportunities for other recreational activities, play and sport. This may include MUGAs, wheels parks / BMX track, outdoor gyms, teen shelter, grass pitches, informal kick about areas (suitable areas of grass for ball games) & tennis courts. The 'other' category was included to capture other features not specifically indicated on the audit form, those identified during the audit included single basketball hoops and outdoor ping-pong table.

5.50 Features considered as part of this theme will generally be located outside of equipped, fenced play areas or play zones as part of a wider surrounding site. The provision of wider opportunities for informal sport and recreation add will add value to the overall offer of a site, and help provide variety and choice for visiting children and families. Many of the features considered as part of this theme will most likely appeal to older children and teenagers but not exclusively.

5.51 **Table 5.5** summarises the results from this theme, showing the quality scores for each feature.

5.52 Most sites had some form of informal kickabout area available as part of the wider site. For the purposes of the audit any largely flat, open area of short mown grass of a suitable size and in a suitable location was considered as a potential kick about area. The standards that would be expected from an informal kick about area would be lower as for a formal grass pitch (i.e. with

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markings and / goals), a good quality kick about area should be free from litter / waste and not have extensive areas of wear or bare soil. Fewer sites had formal grass pitches (i.e. markings and / goals), grass pitches were generally recorded as 'fair' and most had some areas of wear (i.e. at goal mouths).

5.53 The quality and condition of MUGAs varied but were generally recorded as in good condition. Wheels parks were recorded as 'fair' generally had signs of wear and tear, potentially indicating high levels of use and / or the age of the features.

5.54 It was noted that the design, location / placement and layout of features aimed at older children and teenagers may be considered unwelcoming for some users. This is most clearly demonstrated with MUGAs which are surrounded with a 'cage', which may put off some users, most notably young women and girls. This issue of features such as wheels parks and MUGAs being dominated by some boys and often exclusionary for girls, has been highlighted by several recent studies. These studies identify the design of MUGAs (including high fences and narrow entrances) as a key contributing factor for putting girls off using these site, due to wariness of being trapped or harassed by boys.

5.55 Outdoor gym areas, tennis courts and teen shelters were generally noted to be in 'good' or 'fair' condition.

Table 5.5: Other play / sports provision per site (Quality scores)

Site name	MUGA	Wheels park	Outdoor Gym	Teen shelter	Grass pitches	Informal kick-about	Tennis courts	Other
Adwick Park	-	-	-	-	3	3	-	-
Adwick Road	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
Crossfield	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-
Elmfield Park	5	-	5	4	3	5	5	5
Glasgow Paddocks	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Highfields	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-
Hills Lane	-	-	-	-	3	4	-	2
Ivanhoe	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-
Manvers Play Area	5	3	5	-	3	4	-	-
Melton Hill	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-
Memorial Park	-	-	4	-	-	4	-	4
Quarry Park	4	-	5	-	-	3	-	-
Queens Drive	-	-	-	-	3	4	-	-
Recreation Ground	2	-	-	-	3	3	-	-
Stevensons Drive	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-
Stirling Street / Milton Walk	4	3	-	4	2	2	-	-
Sunderland Street	4	-	-	-	4	5	3	-
Westfield Park	4	3	-	3	-	3	3	-

Key priorities: other play / sport provision

- Ensure the wider recreational and sport offer is considered as part of enhancement plans, aiming to provide destination spaces with variety and choice.
- Focus enhancements to informal kick about / grass areas nearby equipped play facilities, but with appropriate buffer zones around areas for different activities.
- Take measures to improve the standards, design and layout of facilities aimed at teenagers such as MUGAs and wheels parks to make them more inclusive for young women, girls and a wider range of users overall. This may include avoiding 'caged' features (for instance only partial fencing of areas), ensuring entrances are open and welcoming, and offering other social spaces that are well located, with good informal oversight and with suitable buffer areas between other activity areas.
- In combination with other themes, this theme has highlighted the need to consider the provision of additional, more challenging play equipment that is suitable for older children and teenagers.

Summary: quality and value audit

Whilst the audit only took in a sample of sites, a range recurring issues and opportunities for enhancement have been highlighted:

- The quality / condition of play parks is variable but a notable amount of play equipment within the audited sites appeared 'tired' and will need replacement in due course.
- Play areas often lack challenge, engaging equipment / landscaping, or opportunities to stretch the imagination through play. There is very little inclusive play equipment.

Chapter 5 Developing an approach to assessing the quality and value of play parks in Doncaster

- The range of play activities on individual sites and between all audited sites is reasonably limited. Sites often provide features for swinging, sliding and climbing – but there are opportunities to provide additional features and equipment to encourage a wider range of physical movements and to experience different sensations.
- Areas of play equipment and other play / recreation features are generally limited in terms of age ranges catered for. There are opportunities to provide multi-age play facilities and features; developing sites that act as social destination spaces that whole families can use for longer periods.
- Teenage facilities are often limited to fenced MUGAs and ball courts and may not cater for the wider play recreation needs of potential users. Many site characteristics highlighted as potential barriers to girls and young women using open space were recorded as part of the site audits.
- Access to sites, and within and through sites is often poor which may restrict good access for some users.
- Play parks are often not well incorporated into the open spaces they are within, in terms of design and location. Play parks are often restricted within a fenced surfaced play area and this restricts opportunities for more ambitious designs and play provision. This affects both the attractiveness of sites and misses opportunities to widen the play offer through informal play, encouraging access to nature and interaction with the landscape.

Chapter 6

Play park accessibility

6.1 Accessibility catchments have been set for each type of play provision identified within Doncaster. These are based on guidance from Fields in Trust [See reference xii] and recognise the likely distance people are willing to travel to reach different types of facilities. Areas that fall outside of the proposed catchments are considered to be areas deficient in good, local access to equipped play facilities. The proposed accessibility catchments are set out below.

- Play parks primarily aimed at very young children (i.e. 5 years old or less).
 - Local Areas for Play (**LAPs**) accessibility catchment: **100 m**
- Play parks aimed at children who can play more independently (i.e. 5 – 11 years).
 - Local Equipped Areas for Play (**LEAPs**): **400 m**
- Play Parks / features aimed at older children (i.e. 11+). Including:
 - Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (play equipment for older children) (**NEAPs**): **1,000 m**
 - Other outdoor recreational provision including MUGAs, Skate / Wheels Parks, BMX track, Single basketball post / hoop (SBP) & Outdoor Gym: **700 m**
 - Teen shelter: **100m**
- Tennis. For the purposes of analysis an access catchment of **1,200 m** has been applied to tennis courts.

Applying accessibility buffers

6.2 Accessibility buffers have been applied using walk time distances (along highway routes) from the access point to each park. A mapped location 'point' for each play park was overlapped with the OS open space dataset which includes shapefiles for parks and open spaces and the access points to enter these parks. Where play parks were not within a park held within the OS open space dataset, aerial imagery was used to identify access points.

6.3 In three instances there were large or linear parks with play spaces focused in one area of the park, which resulted in access points being far away from the corresponding play spaces. This was the case for:

- Denaby Craggs
- Townfield
- Warren House Park

6.4 In these cases, some of the access points were excluded from the accessibility analysis, which was determined on a case-by-case basis by aerial imagery.

Summary of results

6.5 Following the application of access catchments for each type of play park through a mapping exercise, it is possible to identify to what extent areas across Doncaster have good access to play parks. Analysis has been undertaken to understand which areas are within the catchment of one equipped play facility, multiple equipped play facilities and areas that do not have good local access to equipped play facilities.

6.6 It is important to note that a large proportion of Doncaster is rural (areas defined within Doncaster's Local Plan as Countryside Policy Areas or Green

Belt). The majority of residential areas lie within the Main Urban Area, Main Towns, Service Towns & Villages and Defined Villages (areas defined in Doncaster's Local Plan as the 'Development Limits'). Accessibility analysis undertaken as part of this study is mainly concerned with understanding access to play parks in residential areas where people live. The following analysis is therefore mainly focused on areas in the defined Development Limits within Doncaster. Although it should be noted that low density residential development is seen outside of, and directly adjacent to, the defined Development Limits.

LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs

6.7 There is generally good accessibility to traditional play parks (LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs) within Doncaster. 83% of land within the development limits in Doncaster has access to at least one LAP, LEAP or NEAP (as shown in Figure 6.1).

6.8 There are notable gaps where residences are outside of the access catchments to any type of play park. This includes:

- Southwest Intake;
- Southwest Balby;
- East Sprotbrough
- Southeast Bessacarr, Branton and east Hayfield Green;
- Northwest Thorne;
- North East Arskey
- West Highfields
- Northwest Scawthorpe

6.9 A number of the smaller villages are also outside the access catchment of any of type of play park. This includes Fenwick, Moss, Braithwaite, Lindholme,

Micklebring, Old Edlington, Cadeby, High Melton, Hooton Pagnell, and Skelbrooke.

6.10 The accessibility mapping indicates that there are a number of areas that have good access to multiple play sites (i.e. more than one play site is servicing the same local area). Where play park enhancements are being brought forward in these areas, it is recommended that a strategic assessment is undertaken to determine the most appropriate management approach for each site. In some instances, it may be beneficial to allocate resources to develop one high quality and value play park for the surrounding area in preference to retaining multiple play parks servicing the same area. In these circumstances the enhanced play park would ideally provide a high quality, high value site, with play opportunities for all age groups.

6.11 The accessibility analysis shows that there are 86 play parks which are within the access catchments of other sites. In some cases, these sites are within the access catchments of more than one other play park. A summary analysis is shown in Table 6.1. A full list of play parks which are within the access catchments of other play parks is shown in Appendix B.

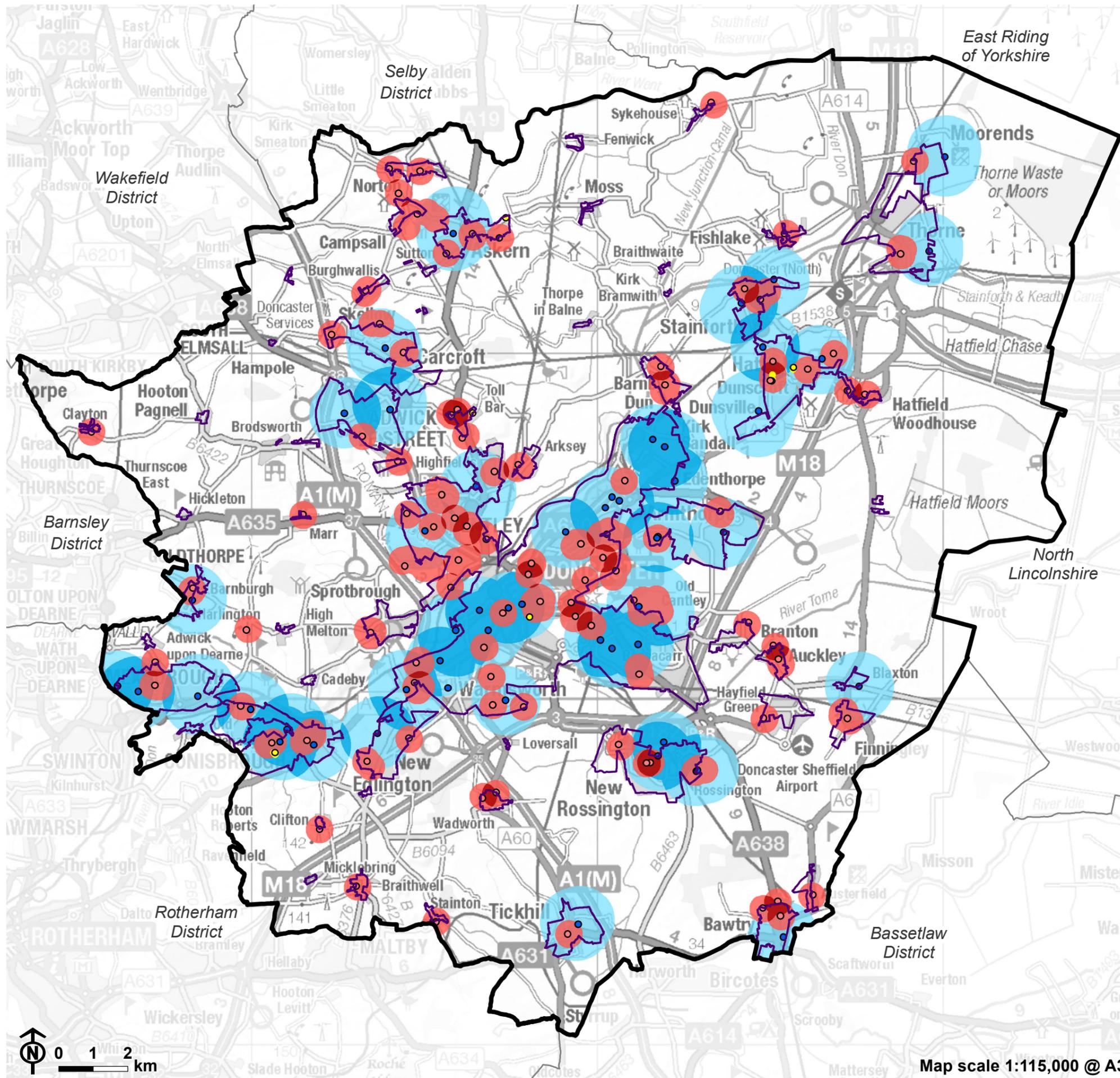
Table 6.1: Play parks located within the access catchments of other play parks

Typology	Within 1 other access catchment	Intersects with 2 other access catchments	Intersects with 3 other access catchments	Intersects with 4 other access catchments
LAP		1	3	
LEAP	44	15	2	1
NEAP	11	7	3	

Access to older children and teenage provision

6.12 Access to play parks and equipment for older children is generally poorer than for the more traditional LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs. Only 24% of land within the development limits is within an access buffer for a teen shelter, BMX track or skate park (see Figure 6.2). Teenage provision with a sport / fitness focus are more common: 68% of land within the development limits is within access to a MUGA, single basketball post, tennis provision or green gym (see Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.1: Access to LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs

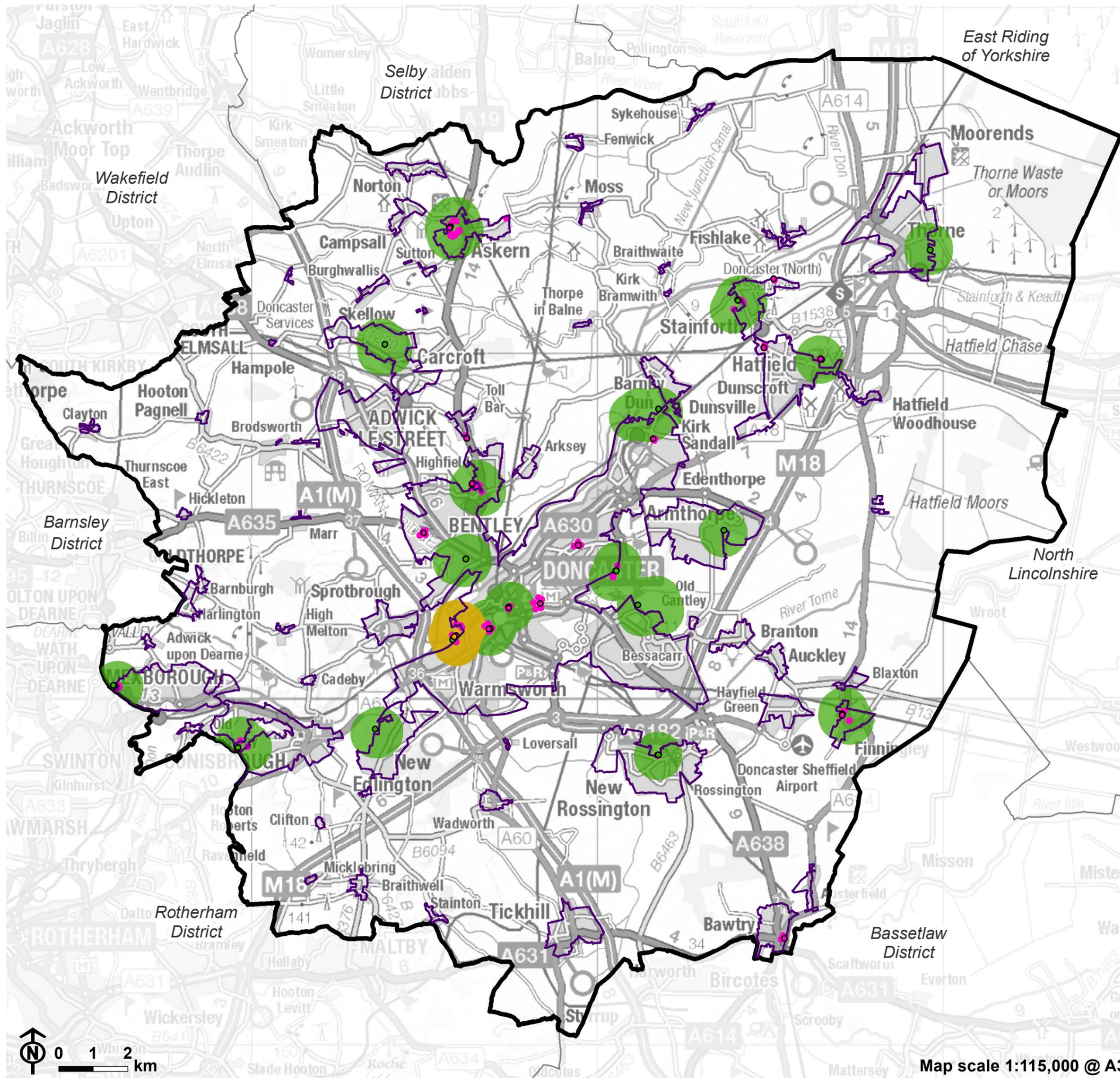


- Doncaster boundary
- Neighbouring local authority
- Development limits
- LAP (100m)
- LEAP (400m)
- NEAP (1000m)
- LAP (100m) 2minute buffer
- LEAP (400m) 5minute buffer
- Overlapping LEAP
- NEAP (1000) 12minute buffer
- Overlapping NEAP



Map scale 1:115,000 @ A3

Figure 6.2: Teenage provision

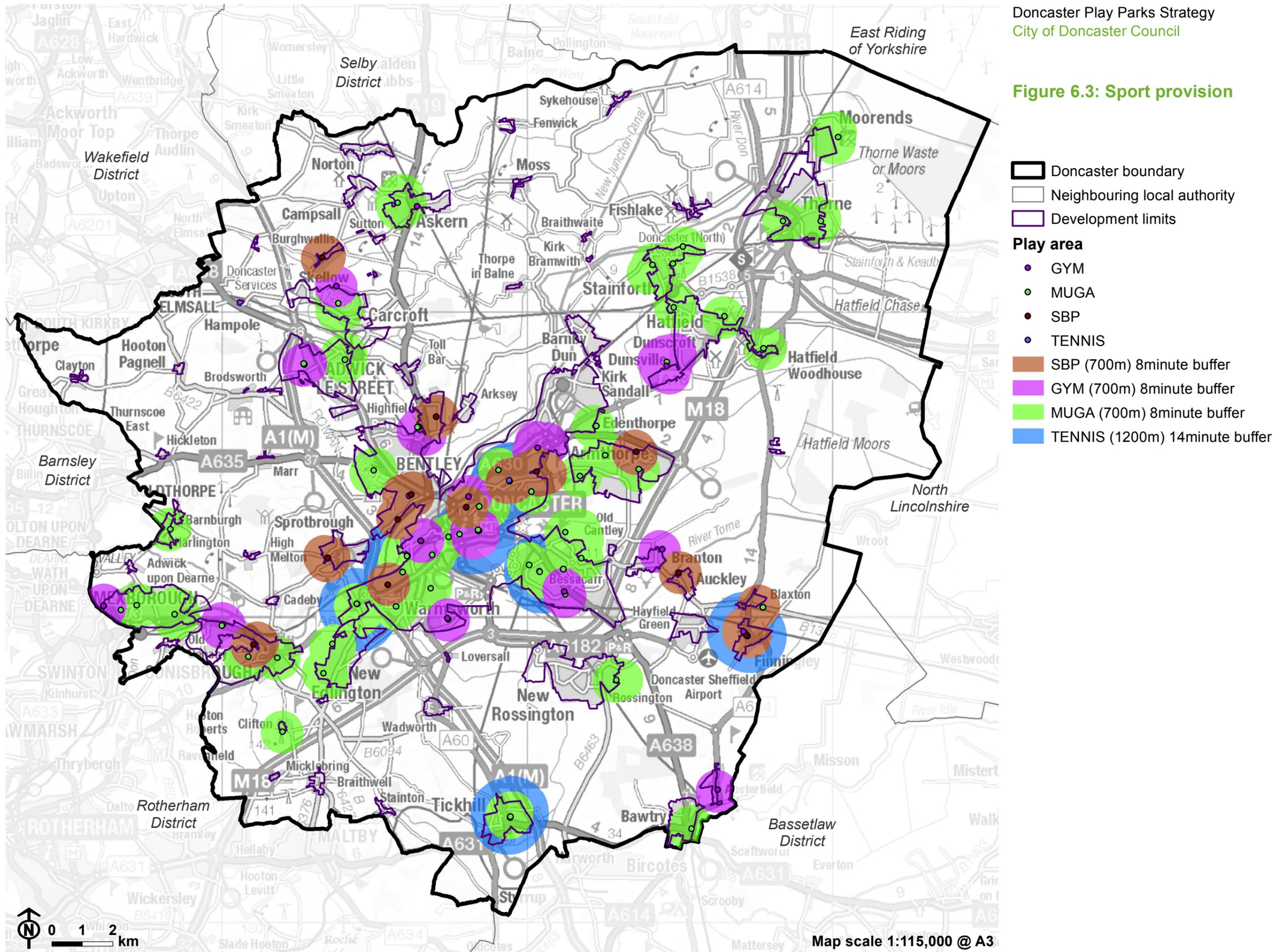


- Doncaster boundary
- Neighbouring local authority
- Development limits
- Play area**
 - TEEN (100m)
 - BMX (700m)
 - SKATE (700m)
 - TEEN (100m) 2minute buffer
 - BMX (700m) 8minute buffer
 - SKATE (700m) 8minute buffer



Map scale 1:115,000 @ A3

Figure 6.3: Sport provision



Key Considerations: Play Accessibility

- There is generally good access to equipped play parks, although there are some key areas which do not have good access to play parks. This includes many of the rural hamlets and villages.
- There are cases where multiple play parks are offering a similar function and serving the same community. These could be priority sites to either enhance the site or change the primary function.
- Provision of facilities for teenagers is generally less accessible, with over three-quarters of land within the development limits being outside of the access buffers to either a teen shelter, BMX track or skate park.

Chapter 7

Play Parks Infrastructure Policies

7.1 The following section sets out the details of the play parks infrastructure policy. The play parks infrastructure policy is comprised of the following elements:

- A **Vision** – setting out what play park provision in Doncaster will look like in the future; *‘where we want to get to’*.
- A set of **Aims** to guide the future approach to planning and managing play parks in the future to achieve the Vision.
- A **Strategic Action Plan** – Specific actions to help meet the aims.
- **Delivery and Design Principles:**
 - **Delivery Principles:** These set out the overarching approach to implementing play park enhancements.
 - **Design Principles:** These set out the priorities for play park design and what good play parks should ‘look like’ and offer in Doncaster.

7.2 The design principles are intended to guide and inform the future design and layout of play parks and enhancements to existing sites. They could be used as part of a brief to a play equipment supplier or landscape designer. The principles could also act as a framework for reviewing design proposals for sites; to determine to what extent they meet the requirements set out in the policy. As set out in the delivery principles, designs for specific sites should also be informed by local community insight and an understanding of the site.

Vision

- **Choice and Variety.** All children in Doncaster will have access to a variety of play experiences, providing choice, with a range of different play types and activities on offer. In addition to formal play parks, open spaces will

provide opportunities for informal play through ensuring spaces are 'playable'. Play parks will inspire children to play, exercise, socialise, learn, and value nature.

- **Welcoming, accessible and inclusive.** Play parks will cater for a wide range of needs and abilities, be accessible and welcoming for all users. All children should be within reasonable walking distance of a safe play facility of good quality and value.
- **Quality over quantity.** The play offer in Doncaster will focus on good design and quality over the quantity of play parks. Where possible, the delivery of destination play parks with a wider range of facilities within a local area will be prioritised over maintaining multiple play parks with lower play value.
- **Well recognised, planned, and managed.** Play parks will be recognised as a key component of promoting health, well being and active lifestyles in Doncaster. Play in open spaces will be planned and managed as part of a co-ordinated open space offer, ensuring resources provide maximum benefit.

Aims

- 1. Plan strategically:** Ensure the effective, strategic planning and management of play parks that deliver value for money. Ensure all relevant council service areas understand the importance and need to delivery high quality play in Doncaster.
- 2. Engage the community:** Ensure children, young people and the wider community are engaged to inform play improvements.
- 3. Adopt appropriate design principles:** Ensure all new play parks or enhancements are informed by good practice in relation to design, layout and integration into the surrounding area.

4. Data and insights: Collect and review data to inform decisions and measure progress.

5. Maintenance, care and safety: Ensure all decisions relating to play take account of play safety and likely future maintenance requirements.

Strategic Action Plan

SA1 Adopt and promote the Play Parks Infrastructure Policy Design and Delivery Principles. Promote awareness and adoption of the principles amongst key partners such as Parish Councils and housing providers.

SA2 Develop and deliver initial pilot projects to demonstrate and test the principles.

SA3 Review the delivery and management of play parks as part of the strategic management of parks and open spaces to ensure cross benefits / effective working between services (This is currently fragmented and not fully effective). It is recommended a review of current division of responsibilities for park and open space management between different council departments and directorates.

SA4 Establish a working group as part of the delivery of SA3. The group could review, develop and support the delivery of play park enhancement plans, ensuring key officers and stakeholders are engaged. The group will need to help determine how plans may be best delivered and ensure information is appropriately considered as part of budget planning.

SA5 Implement a rolling programme of quality and value assessments for parks / open spaces and play parks, utilising the approach to site assessment developed as part of the policy.

SA6 Consider the rationalisation of play parks as part of a rolling programme of investment. This will likely require decommissioning some play parks to allow more effective investment in sites that have the capacity to deliver the highest value and benefit in areas of most need. This should take account of access to play parks and only decommission sites where good local access is provided by other play parks in the surrounding area. Ensure practical or financial implications for future maintenance are considered as part of enhancement plans or decommissioning of sites.

SA7 Review how the play parks infrastructure policy can inform future planning decisions. This could include adopting the principles as supplementary guidance to support existing policy. Ideally this should inform assessments to determine whether new play parks should be required as part of a new development, or if enhancements to existing play facilities in the local area would be more appropriate.

SA8 Ensure local play needs are fully considered as part of future Community Investment Masterplans and revisions.

SA9 Strengthen mechanisms to engage Parish Councils as part of planning decisions that affect play park provision in their area. This engagement could include reviewing options for the type of play park that could be provided, or options for future adoption and management.

SA10 Ensure play provision / satisfaction with play parks is considered as part of any future residents surveys.

SA11 As a means of engagement, consider establishing a children and teenager design review panel process to help inform future enhancements at specific sites. This could be trialled as part of future Youth Council events.

SA12 Ensure the importance of play is promoted and 'mainstreamed' as part of wider health, well-being and physical activity programmes. Identify opportunities where play enhancement (either equipped or more informal opportunities for play) can be incorporated into other initiatives / local development. Key opportunities may include green space enhancements, active travel schemes town centre regeneration schemes and new housing or commercial developments. Ensure any future active travel schemes consider the location of existing play parks and opportunities to provide safer streets and access routes for children to access opportunities for play.

SA13 Ensure any programmes to enhance signage or wayfinding associated with parks or active travel consider incorporating signage for play.

SA14 Plan for a periodic review of the play parks infrastructure policy, providing updates where required. This should include updates to play park mapping and accessibility mapping, taking account of sites that have been decommissioned or new play park facilities. Consider maintaining an aspirational five year / annual investment plan, utilising the data set out in this report and future data collected as part of site audits. This should take account of likely costs, to inform budgets and facilitate opportunities to secure funding.

Design and Delivery Principles

7.3 The following section sets out the key principles that should be considered when developing enhancement plans for play parks or designing new play parks. The principles also provide the basis of a set of design requirements and standards that could help to shape requirements as part of future policy for new developments (where new play parks or enhancements are required). It is also recommended that all parties, organisations and partners that manage or help to plan for play parks in Doncaster (including Parish councils) adopt the principles to help develop a consistent approach to play parks across the area.

Delivery principles

Prioritise enhancements in areas of most need

- Enhancements to existing play parks and provision of new play parks should be located in areas of most need. Doncaster-wide data should be used to highlight areas where investment may be best placed. The following key data should be used and cross referenced to identify areas with the greatest play needs:
 - Population under 18 years of age.
 - Deprivation indices (such as health deprivation).
 - Access to open space – considering areas with higher / lower levels of access to open space.
 - Quality and value data will be incorporated into a prioritisation process. (pending gathering comprehensive quality and value data for all play parks as part of future work).

Work at a neighbourhood scale

- Future enhancement programmes should work towards providing a high quality play park that services each neighbourhood or ward. Following the identification of broad priority areas, work will need to be undertaken to ensure investment in play parks will provide maximum benefits for local communities. In some circumstances it may be appropriate to consolidate provision within a local area, decommissioning and removing lower value play parks, and focussing investment on a smaller number of sites to maximise play value; providing a more varied offer on a single site.
- Accessibility mapping has been used to identify areas where multiple equipped play parks are serving similar catchments. Smaller, lower quality and value play parks that are within the catchments of larger sites (that may be better placed to provide a destination play offer) could be considered for removal. In general, play area removal should only be considered alongside enhancement of a play park nearby. Site assessments should be used to ensure a net gain in the overall play value provided in the local area.
- If it is deemed appropriate to decommission any play areas in the future, these areas will be re-instated to some form of informal recreation use (such as grassland for recreation, or a seating area) or an area of accessible nature.

Understand the site

- Quality and value assessments should be used to guide enhancements and prioritise investment where play provision is currently poor quality or value.
- Sites that are identified for enhancement should be subject to site appraisal to inform the design of the play park. This should take account of the wider site and any other facilities. Site appraisals should be guided by the proposed audit approach and take account of the design principles (below) to help identify opportunities to achieve the requirements set out in the policy.

Involve the community effectively

- Communities should be engaged to understand the types of activities and equipment which would most likely meet local needs. Ideally this should not just focus on items of fixed play equipment, but the wider play experience, opportunities for exploration and access to nature that can be provided on a site.
- Where possible any consultation should include innovative methods of actively engaging people, particularly young people, with the design. The principle of projects being done *with* communities not *to* communities should apply.
- Efforts should be made to involve a wide cross section of the community, including those that are hard to reach – for instance those with limited digital access. Use traffic light, green / red grading or ‘smiley face’ scoring to make evaluative or ‘voting’ processes simple for children to understand.
- Engagement should be cost effective by co-ordinating insight gathering with other community events or activities which will provide a draw for families and young people. Where possible, task adults, agencies, play workers or teachers with experience in working with children to lead on engagement activities.
- Where possible, utilise several engagement methods to add depth and variety to the type of information that can be drawn upon.

Be opportunistic

- Through ongoing dialogue and cross team communications within CDC and partner organisations, opportunities should be sought to improve the overall play value and offer of play parks in Doncaster. Examples include:
 - Highways works: highways works on busy roads near parks could include traffic calming measures and/or road crossings to improve safe access to play parks.

- **Active travel:** active travel schemes such as new bike lanes may improve access links to existing parks and present opportunities to create destination play parks as part of a wider active network.
- **Parking:** works to parking areas should aim to incorporate additional disabled parking bays near play spaces and provide appropriate buffers and boundaries between parks and parking areas.
- **Tree felling:** essential tree works nearby play areas may provide material for natural play features (e.g. tree trunks to climb on etc), or open up areas that can be used for natural play areas as an extension to equipped play facilities.
- **Habitat creation and tree planting:** play park enhancement and re-design may provide the opportunity to provide habitat areas and incorporate tree planting to improve the setting of the site and help meet any tree planting aspirations the council may have in the future.
- **Community hubs and facilities:** the development of new community hubs, children's facilities, schools or retail areas within a local area may provide a new 'audience' that would benefit from an existing play park and help to identify sites where investment would provide significant benefit to a wide range of users.

Process plan

7.4 The development of a new play park, or enhancements to an existing play park will involve drawing on expert advice (from a landscape architect or reputable play supplier) and the views of the community. The process for developing plans for a site that has been identified for enhancement is summarised as follows:

1. Undertake a site appraisal or engage and landscape architect / designer to do so.

2. Engage the community or youth panel to feed into a brief and to identify issues to be addressed.
3. Obtain designs and proposals from companies (Tender stage) – utilise the design principles as part of the brief.
4. Appraise designs and proposals against the play parks infrastructure policy requirements and with regards to cost.
5. Appoint contractor.
6. Minor adjustments to the design and opportunities for other interventions identified as part of community engagement.
7. Temporary signage installed and communications about works undertaken; providing updates to residents during the implementation stage as required.

Design principles

The design principles provide an outline of the key characteristics and standards that should be achieved for play park design within Doncaster wherever possible:

- The design principles are aspirational and are intended to act as a framework and guide during the project planning process.
- They are intended to encourage consideration of a range of options for creating more rich, varied and inclusive play environments that encourage physical activity.
- The application and relevance of each principle will vary from site to site and may be of greater or less relevance depending on the situation.

- In applying the principles, decision makers will need to take account of the surrounding local area, existing and potential users of the site and available budgets.
- The design principles – or elements of the design principles - could be shared with suppliers or designers to provide the basis of, or a component of, a brief.

7.5 Some of the design principles are accompanied by ‘key tools’ which provide specific examples and ideas for interventions and design features that could be used to help deliver the principles on the ground.

‘Children and Young People need to be made more welcome in the public domain, but with so many factors now restricting their access to the outdoors, it is becoming all the more essential that their play spaces provide a far wider range of play activities and environments than they have in the past.’ (Play England, Design for Play).

Provide choice and a range of play experiences

- Provide opportunities for a range of physical activities, including running, hopping, jumping, rocking, swinging, sliding, climbing, balancing, stretching and reaching, rotating, hanging, rolling, hiding and crawling. Play areas should also provide opportunities for resting.
- Include opportunities for risk taking and challenge such as balancing features / assault courses.
- Choose equipment which provides excitement and a sense of achievement.
- Ensure play equipment and the overall layout of the site is engaging and promotes imaginative and social play. This may include the use of ‘themed’ play areas or equipment.
- Ensure other engaging and sensory items are integrated into play features such as sound making, counting, touching & viewing.

- Avoid overly prescriptive equipment and choose pieces which can be used in different ways by different ages and abilities.
- Provide a range of opportunities for social play, imaginative play and physical play for all ages and abilities.

Key tools

- Prioritise quality over quantity, for example, choosing one large, multifunctional piece of equipment will likely provide a higher cost-value ratio as opposed to a few single use pieces of equipment.
- Identify opportunities to encourage informal and natural play in the surrounding area to add to the range of physical activities children can undertake such as trails through woodland areas, slopes and felled tree trunks for climbing.
- Provide social seating for children, teenagers and adults that is well placed to provide informal oversight. Where possible include quiet areas for children to retreat to and where they can observe activity.

Make the best use of space

- Ensure the best use of space is delivered in more confined sites or enclosed play parks where spacing and orientation of equipment will need to adhere to fall space and safety standards (BS EN 1176).

Key tools

- Maximise floor space by using playful markings on wet pour and safety surfacing. Marking could suggest routes through the sites, numbered markings, hop-scotch or jumping pads.
- Utilise boundary fences or awkward left-over space for narrow features such as play panels or noise makers.

Suitable for the setting / integrated into the site

- Choose a scale of equipment which is appropriate to the scale of the site.
- Ensure the play area contributes to and does not detract from the site's character. Play park design should be functional but attractive and appropriate to the context of the site.
- Incorporate and utilise natural elements as playful features.

Key tools

- Make use of natural elements, such as felled trees, and integrate with surrounding natural features, for example woodland and copses.
- Integrate features into the topography of the site for example placing slides on natural slopes or to banks to mark the perimeter of the site. Adding land forming such mounds where possible to provide additional play opportunities (i.e. for rolling, crawling, running, hiding etc.).
- Where possible, use low maintenance planting and trees to add interest, create a welcoming feel and help define areas used for play.

Sites are well placed

- New play areas or play area upgrades should seek to meet a local need. The location of existing play facilities should be one of many factors that influence identification of priority sites for enhancement.
- New play parks should be placed where people are most likely to use them frequently and be convenient to use. A well-used play park is likely to increase sense of safety and security overall.
- Sites should be located near the entrances of sites they are within and be well connected to any walking and cycling routes, bus stops and routes to disabled parking bays.
- New play areas should be placed to make the most of any natural surveillance.

- Where possible, new play parks should be placed within easy walking distance of other community hubs and areas of activity. This may include routes to and from schools, nearby existing community facilities (such as community centres, shops, cafes etc.).
- Sites should ideally include spaces with sun and shade or be near areas that provide shade.

Appropriate boundary treatments.

- Where possible, avoid fixed boundaries around play parks, particularly for older children. This provides a flexible layout and will allow for easy expansion or replacement of equipment in the future. It will also promote the spill out of playful activities beyond the equipped area, encouraging increased run around space, interactions with nature and imaginative play.
- Where fenced boundaries are installed and retained, make the most of these as additional playful features through the introduction of cognitive, sensory and tactile play panels.
- Avoid the use of dog grids as these collect litter and are not an entirely effective way of keeping dogs out of equipped play areas.
- Explore alternative ways of demarcating formal play areas, for example through mounds, stepped and vegetated edges. These in themselves can be playful features or act as areas for resting.
- Play parks should maintain a suitable minimum separation distance between the main activity area and any residential dwellings. This is to promote informal oversight but also create space where children are free to play and do not feel they are encroaching on private space, reducing the possibility of conflict. Neighbourhood Areas for Play and provision for older children should have a minimum separation distance of around 30 metres from nearby residential dwellings. Provision for younger children may have a smaller separation distance but should be no closer than 5 metres from the boundary of the nearest dwelling.
- Appropriate boundaries should be provided between play areas, roads, car parks and other features which present a safety concern or a detracting

feature. The type of boundary will depend on the location but will likely include fences and bollards. Where possible planting (such as tree planting and hedging) should be used to soften boundaries whilst also maintaining good visibility and sight lines.

Accessible for all and inclusive

- All new play parks and enhancements to play parks should include provision that is accessible and meets the needs of people with disabilities. Developing proposals for play parks should be based on the social model of disability which identifies that disability is a result of the barriers faced by individuals with varying needs (which may be physical, sensory, learning or medical considerations). This definition of disability recognises that it is not the individuals needs that create the disability but the way in which society responds to those needs.
- Play parks should offer opportunities for children of multiple ages and abilities to play together, not to feel segregated into different zones or on different pieces of equipment. Accessible play parks should incorporate fully accessible equipment which is fun and engaging to all abilities, allowing an intersection of children to play all at once. This will provide opportunities for those with disabilities to play alongside siblings, friends and carers.
- Play parks should offer opportunities for motor, sensory and mental inclusion within the play area for those who are less able.
- Access routes within open spaces, including from key entrances and car parks, should meet recognised standards for wheelchair access. Surfacing and sloped access should be designed to be even and low maintenance.
- Disabled parking bays should ideally be provided nearby to play parks, whether these are designated in adjoining car parks or nearby street parking.
- The design of play parks should incorporate features that provide for and accommodate children with additional needs, including learning needs and autism. This can include providing quiet and cosy spaces for when senses

are overwhelmed, as well as observation points to allow children to observe others playing until they feel comfortable joining in. By creating zones for different energy levels, it provides those who find it difficult to socialise opportunities to join in when feeling confident but to recede when needed.

- Key equipment and characteristics that should be considered include bucket swings, spaces to feel cocooned, opportunities to develop spatial awareness, wheelchair accessible seating areas, roundabouts at floor level, and climbing equipment that incorporates wide ramps.

Inclusive teenage provision

- Play parks and wider zones for play and sport within open spaces should design out features which may exclude older children and teenagers from using the site for play.
- Site design and layout should consider the needs of girls and young women and aim to reduce features that may exclude them from open space and parks. Clear sight lines, and opportunities to move from being active and performative, to observing and being social should be incorporated into enhancement plans.
- Site designs and choice of equipment should recognise that older children and teenagers should be provided with a choice of challenging fixed and moving equipment. Ball games areas should not always be the default provision for teenage provision as this is unlikely to provide for the needs of all users.

Key tools

- Generous social space with a range of seating options that allows teenagers to hang out in smaller groups adjacent to areas with an activity focus.

- Activity areas could include robust structures for exercise or hanging off, adventurous structures, wheeled sports areas and performance spaces.
- Multi Use Games Areas should maintain sense of safety and sight lines, being partially fenced (i.e. not a full 'cage') or with low fencing with observation areas / seating around the edges, creating a multifunctional space for a wider range of users.
- Focus enhancements for teenage provision on sites which already have street lighting and safety features.

Suitable materials

- Timber equipment has proved to be a maintenance issue and has been shown to be a draw for vandalism. Therefore, it is essential that the materials which are chosen are durable and robust.
- Where possible, equipment should be recycled and / or use recyclable materials.
- Aim to work with play suppliers who calculate sustainability data / carbon footprint assessments for their products.

Safe and well maintained sites

- Avoid the installation of dog grids which trap litter and can become a maintenance issue. Where existing play parks are being enhanced, consider the removal and infill of grids.
- Where fenced play areas are used, avoid short mown grass at the boundary edge which may require additional maintenance operations e.g. strimming or spraying off grass edges. Instead, consider hard surfacing lips / paths around the edge of the play area, or create meadow edges to the play area both encouraging wildlife and interactions with nature.
- Any landscaping or planting should be robust, low maintenance and designed to withstand wear and tear from play activities.

Chapter 7 Design and Delivery Principles

- Litter bins should be provided within, or within easy reach of, the play park. Include information about recycling and litter control as part of signage.

Appendix A

Site audit form and scoring guidance

Appendix B

Play parks located within the access catchments of other play parks.

Assessment of play parks that are within the catchments of other play parks (indicating areas with good access to multiple sites)

Site name	Play typology	Number of additional access catchments the play park falls within	Ward
St James Street Flatts	LEAP	4	Town
Broadway	LAP	3	Hatfield
Grange Lane	LEAP	3	Rossington & Bawtry
Grantham St	LEAP	3	Rossington & Bawtry
Low Rd	LEAP	3	Conisbrough
South Street	LAP	3	Town
St Andrews	LAP	3	Conisbrough
Stirling Street	NEAP	3	Town
Urban Road	NEAP	3	Hexthorpe & Balby North
Westfield Park	NEAP	3	Hexthorpe & Balby North

Site name	Play typology	Number of additional access catchments the play park falls within	Ward
Back Lane	LEAP	2	Stainforth & Barnby Dun
Broadway	LEAP	2	Hatfield
Broxholme Lane	LEAP	2	Town
Buttermere Crescent	LEAP	2	Bessacarr
Common Lane	LEAP	2	Edlington & Warmsworth
Coronation Road Play Area	LEAP	2	Hexthorpe & Balby North
Dakota Way	LEAP	2	Town
East Lane – education land	LEAP	2	Stainforth & Barnby Dun
Elmfield Park	LEAP	2	Town
Goodison Boulevard	NEAP	2	Bessacarr
Guest Lane	LEAP	2	Edlington & Warmsworth
Haslam Park	NEAP	2	Bessacarr
Hexthorpe Park	NEAP	2	Hexthorpe & Balby North
Holly Bush Lane	NEAP	2	Edenthorpe & Kirk Sandall
Ivanhoe Park	LEAP	2	Conisbrough
Jenkinson Dr	LEAP	2	Armthorpe
Millcroft Crescent	LAP	2	Hatfield

Site name	Play typology	Number of additional access catchments the play park falls within	Ward
Recreation Ground	NEAP	2	Conisbrough
Stoops Lane	LEAP	2	Bessacarr
The Oval	NEAP	2	Conisbrough
Windmill Avenue	NEAP	2	Conisbrough
York Rd	LEAP	2	Hatfield
Adwick Road	LEAP	1	Mexborough
Alfred Rd	LEAP	1	Norton & Askern
Askern Lake	LEAP	1	Norton & Askern
Atterby Drive	NEAP	1	Rossington & Bawtry
Avenue Rd	LEAP	1	Bentley
Beechfield Rd	NEAP	1	Town
Belle Vue Av	LEAP	1	Town
Belvoir Avenue	LEAP	1	Sprotbrough
Brickyards	LEAP	1	Bentley
Brodsworth Way	LEAP	1	Rossington & Bawtry
Broomhouse Lane	LEAP	1	Edlington & Warmsworth
Butterscotch Walk	LEAP	1	Bentley
Campsall Park	LEAP	1	Norton & Askern
Cantley Park	LEAP	1	Bessacarr

Site name	Play typology	Number of additional access catchments the play park falls within	Ward
Central Av	LEAP	1	Adwick le Street & Carcroft
Chatsworth Crescent	LEAP	1	Roman Ridge
Cornflower Dr	NEAP	1	Bessacarr
Crossfield Lane	LEAP	1	Norton & Askern
Cusworth Park	LEAP	1	Roman Ridge
Darlington Grove	LEAP	1	Thorne & Moorends
Emily Dr	LEAP	1	Roman Ridge
Galley Fields	LEAP	1	Rossington & Bawtry
Grange Av	LEAP	1	Hatfield
Grove Gardens	LEAP	1	Wheatley Hills & Intake
Hatfield Water Park	LEAP	1	Hatfield
Hills Lane	LEAP	1	Wheatley Hills & Intake
Howbeck Drive	LEAP	1	Edlington & Warmsworth
Kingswood Close	LEAP	1	Rossington & Bawtry
Lindley Rd	NEAP	1	Finningley
Magenta Crescent	LEAP	1	Tickhill & Wadsworth

Site name	Play typology	Number of additional access catchments the play park falls within	Ward
Malham Close	LEAP	1	Rossington & Bawtry
Manvers Road	NEAP	1	Mexborough
Memorial Park	LEAP	1	Thorne & Moorends
Mere Lane	NEAP	1	Edenthorpe & Kirk Sandall
Northfield Av	LEAP	1	Bentley
Osberton Street	LEAP	1	Tickhill & Wadsworth
Owston Road	LEAP	1	Adwick le Street & Carcroft
Park Road	LEAP	1	Mexborough
Roman Ridge	LEAP	1	Bentley
Rossington Miners Welfare	NEAP	1	Rossington & Bawtry
Schofield Street	NEAP	1	Mexborough
Shackelton Rd	LEAP	1	Wheatley Hills & Intake
Spey Drive	LEAP	1	Finningley
St Chad's Square	LEAP	1	Conisbrough
St Mary's Crescent	LEAP	1	Town
St Mary's Rd	LEAP	1	Tickhill & Wadsworth
Stevenson Dr	LEAP	1	Balby South

Site name	Play typology	Number of additional access catchments the play park falls within	Ward
Wadworth Memorial Park	LEAP	1	Tickhill & Wadsworth
Walpole Close	NEAP	1	Balby South
Waverley Avenue	NEAP	1	Hexthorpe & Balby North
Woodfield Plantation / Brayford Road	LEAP	1	Tickhill & Wadsworth

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