

A collage of 24 hexagonal images arranged in a honeycomb pattern, depicting various scenes from Llanelli. The images include: a blue sky with clouds; a red and white striped lighthouse; a clock tower; a green hillside; a body of water; a building with a clock; a sunburst through trees; a boat with flags; a forest; a white building; a clock on a wall with the year 1894; a building with a sign that reads 'MARKET ALL CINEMA SINEMA NEW'; and a building with a sign that reads 'ALL CINEMA SINEMA NEW'. The collage is set against a white background.



January / Ionawr 2025

Contents	Page Number
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
2.0 Overarching Standards	2
2.2 Formal Outdoor Space	2
2.3 Informal Outdoor Space	3
2.4 Quality	3
3.0 Methodology	4
3.1 Collation and updating of Open Space data set	4
3.2 Determining Accessibility	5
3.3 Population Statistics and Electoral Ward data	5
4.0 Results	5
4.1 Quantity Formal Outdoor Space	5
4.2 Quantity of Informal Outdoor Space	7
4.3 Allotment and Community Growing Space	8
4.4 Accessibility Formal Outdoor Space	9
4.5 Accessibility Informal Outdoor Space	9
5.0 Analysis and conclusions	10
5.1 General Comments	10
5.2 Quantity of Formal Open Space	11
5.3 Quantity of Informal Open Space	12
0.6 Conclusion	12
7.0 Replacement LDP Policies	13
Tables	
Table 1: Recommended Benchmark Guidelines – Formal Outdoor Space	2
Table 2: Recommended Benchmark Guidelines – Informal Outdoor Space	3
Table 3: Summary Table of Open Space Typologies	4
Table 4: Quantity of Formal Outdoor Space Within Blaenau Gwent	6
Table 5: Quantity of Formal Outdoor Space by Ward	6
Table 6: Quantity of Informal Outdoor Space Within Blaenau Gwent	7
Table 7: Quantity of Informal Outdoor Space by Ward	7
Table 8: Quantity of Allotment and Community Growing Space	8
Table 9: The Accessibility of Formal Outdoor Space by Ward	9
Table 10: The Accessibility of Informal Outdoor Space by Ward	10
Maps	
Appendix 1: All Outdoor Sport with 1200m Accessibility Buffer	
Appendix 2: Grass Sports Pitch with 1200m Accessibility Buffer	
Appendix 3: Equipped Play Area with 400m Accessibility Buffer	
Appendix 4: Other Outdoor Sport with 700m Accessibility Buffer	
Appendix 5: Formal Park or Garden with 710m Accessibility Buffer	
Appendix 6: Amenity Space with 480m Accessibility buffer	
Appendix 7: Allotments/Community Growing Space	
Appendix 8: Natural Semi-Natural Space with 720m Accessibility Buffer	

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Open space and recreational spaces are vital for our health, well-being and amenity. Such spaces also contribute to an area's green infrastructure. They provide a place for play, sport, healthy physical activity and a place to relax. They provide the opportunity to engage with nature, which contributes to our quality of life and are a key ingredient of 'place making'. Networks of high quality, accessible green spaces and recreation spaces will also promote nature conservation, biodiversity and provide enjoyable opportunities for residents and visitors to participate in a wide range of physical activities. These activities are important for the well-being of children and adults and for the social, environmental, cultural and economic life of communities within Blaenau Gwent.

1.2 **Planning Policy Wales (PPW) – Edition 12 (February 2024)** requires that planning authorities should provide a framework for well-located, good quality sport, recreational and leisure facilities, and develop clear policies for the provision, protection and enhancement of sport, recreation and leisure facilities.

1.3 These policies should set standards of provision, so that local deficiencies can be identified and met through the planning process and set out policies to avoid or resolve conflict between different activities. The objectives set out in PPW can best be achieved by undertaking local assessments of need and audits of existing provision. These assessments, taken together, form an Open Space Assessment which, among other things, should be used to inform the preparation, monitoring and review of LDP policies. This assessment therefore seeks to establish an updated open space audit to inform the Council's emerging Replacement Local Development Plan.

1.4 Information from such assessments may also be useful for the preparation of corporate Open Space Strategies and Community Strategies in which broader environmental, social and health issues can be addressed.

1.5 PPW does not prescribe particular standards of provision. Instead, **Technical Advice Note 16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space** advises these should be based on the results of the Open Space Assessment process having considered existing local provision and accessibility issues.

1.6 TAN 16 provides a broad definition of 'open space' that includes all open space of public value, including land, and water areas like rivers, canals, lakes, reservoirs and disused basins which offer opportunities for sport, recreation and tourism. In preparing this assessment the Council has referred to the latest Fields in Trust (FIT) [Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play "Beyond the Six Acre Standard"](#) for Wales (January 2017) as the benchmark standards to consider existing provision in the County Borough. These latest standards supersede the FIT benchmark standards referenced in TAN 16 that was published in 2009. The FIT guidance set out useful standards for the wide range of open space typologies referenced in national policy and cover two broad categories: formal outdoor space and informal outdoor space. These categories form the basis of the open space assessment.

2.0 Overarching Standards

2.1 Technical Advice Note (TAN) 16 advises that PPW does not prescribe particular standards of provision. Instead, these should be based on the results of the Open Space Assessment Process having considered existing local provision and accessibility. The TAN refers to the Fields in Trust's benchmark standards as providing a useful benchmark for considering local standards of provision. These are based on two broad categories, formal outdoor space and informal outdoor space, that cover a wide range of open space typologies in Blaenau Gwent.

2.2 This study has referred to the latest **Fields in Trust (FIT) Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play Beyond the Six Acre Standard (Wales)** to inform the open space GIS mapping audit and assessment. The document explains how good planning and design is central to the philosophy and objectives of Fields in Trust and adds value to the overall quality of an area, helping to create a sense of place and space as well as contributing to the health and wellbeing of residents. The Fields in Trust policy framework seeks the protection, provision and improvement of outdoor spaces for sport and play as part of the provision of sustainable communities. The document provides benchmark standards for both formal and informal outdoor space.

The council will use the following standards as part of this Open Space Assessment:

- Open Space Quantity: amount of existing provision and whether surpluses or deficiencies exist when measures against guideline standards.
- Open Space Accessibility: Whether the existing provision is accessible to the local community.

2.2 Formal Outdoor Space

2.2.1 Using the FIT standards helps to ensure that the provision of outdoor sport, play and informal open space is of a sufficient quantity and size to enable effective use; is located in an accessible location and in close proximity to dwellings; and is of a quality to maintain longevity and to encourage its continued use. The following benchmark guidelines from the FIT guidance have been used for the assessment of formal outdoor spaces.

Table 1: Recommended Benchmark Guidelines – Formal Outdoor Space

Open Space Typology	Quantity Guideline (hectares per 1,000 population)	Walking Guideline (walking distance - metres from dwellings)
Playing pitches	1.20	1,200m
All outdoor sports	1.60	1,200m
Equipped/designated play areas	0.25	400m
Other outdoor provision (MUGAs and skateboard parks)	0.30	700m

Source: Fields in Trust – Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play Beyond the Six Acre Standard (Wales)

2.3 Informal Outdoor Space

2.3.1 The provision of public open space has multiple benefits for the health and well-being of the local population. There are categories of open space that do not sit under natural greenspace or play space but are still important for people's quality of life. These public open spaces include Amenity Greenspace (informal recreation spaces which includes areas in an around housing) and Parks and Gardens (urban parks, country parks and formal gardens open to the public).

2.3.2 With regard to amenity green spaces, it is recognised that smaller amenity areas within and around residential areas provided communities with invaluable green space for people of all ages to use and enjoy during Covid lockdowns. These important smaller amenity areas have therefore been identified and mapped as Amenity Green Space where they formed usable open spaces.

2.3.3 The following benchmark guidelines from the FIT guidance have been used for the assessment of informal outdoor spaces.

Table 2: Recommended Benchmark Guidelines – Informal Outdoor Space

Open Space Typology	Quantity Guideline (hectares per 1,000 population)	Walking Guideline (walking distance - metres from dwellings)
Parks and Gardens	0.80	710m
Amenity Green Space	0.60	480m
Natural/Semi-natural	2.0	720m
Allotments	0.30	NA

Source: Fields in Trust – Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play Beyond the Six Acre Standard (Wales)

2.4 Quality

2.4.1 While quantity and accessibility of existing provision is considered by this assessment, a detailed review of the quality of individual open spaces is not included within the scope of this assessment.

2.4.2 Safety and quality reviews are undertaken by external bodies or community groups who manage these areas, for example, outdoor sports facilities are monitored by the clubs and community organisations that have taken over the management of sites. The council undertakes formal inspections of play areas in compliance with the associated Health & Safety regulations. This includes an annual independent inspection. However, detailed quality of provision reviews do not form part of this assessment.

2.4.3 Notwithstanding this, one of main quality considerations in the Fields in Trust guidance is the accessibility of open spaces and play areas and this is considered as part of this study. This assessment has also been prepared in consultation with the Council's Neighbourhood Services and the updated accessibility and provision information provided by the assessment will help to inform future reviews prepared by the Council.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Collation and updating of Open Space data set

3.1.1 The Authority has made every effort to verify and accurately map the wide range of open space types present in the County Borough. When identifying open space where more than one typology was present, the Authority identified these areas separately to ensure there is no over lapping and to avoid any erroneous double counting of provision.

3.1.2 School playing fields with no public access have not been included within the open space mapping for this assessment. Within the borough, such educational facilities remain largely constrained to school use only with areas are being fenced off from the public. The only exception to this is the running track at Brynmawr Comprehensive School which is available for use by the community and has therefore been included within this study.

3.1.3 The following datasets were used as the starting point for open space mapping based on the open space typologies identified within the FIT Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play. More than one dataset can be included within the open space typologies as summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Summary Table of Open Space Typologies

Open Space Typology	Facilities included
<i>Formal Outdoor Space</i>	
Playing pitches	Grass sports pitches
All outdoor sports	Golf courses, bowling greens, tennis courts, running tracks, water sports, BMX tracks, mountain bike tracks
Equipped/designated play areas	LAP (Local Area for Play), LEAP (Local Equipped Area for Play) NEAP (Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play)
Other outdoor provision	Multi use games areas inc 3G pitches wheeled sports - skateboard parks, ball courts
<i>Informal Outdoor Space</i>	
Parks and Gardens	Parks and Gardens excluding facilities that have been included in other typologies
Amenity Green Space	Informal amenity areas such as grassed amenity areas around housing estates, council maintained amenity areas and other areas identified through this assessment.
Natural and Semi-Natural	Common Land, LNR (Local Nature Reserve), Woodland, Priority Habitats, Wetland, River Corridors, Other Identified Leisure Areas
<i>Allotments</i>	
Allotments and community gardens	Allotment and community gardens, which provide growing space

3.1.4 All open space datasets were reviewed and verified by Authority staff using local records and site visits where necessary. The datasets were then merged and processed to form the individual open space typologies identified in the FIT guidelines.

3.1.5 All open space typologies used the FIT benchmark standards for accessibility apart from Allotments, where no formal standard has been established by Fields in Trust, therefore this typology has been set out separately and is not been included within the accessibility data in this document.

3.1.6 Following the spatial mapping and verification exercise, open space provision and accessibility figures were produced for the County Borough as a whole and by electoral ward to allow for more detailed analysis.

3.2 Determining Accessibility

3.2.1 In order to determine the proximity of housing to open space, the FIT benchmark standard provided a walking distance (see Tables 1 and 2 above). Buffer zones were created based on the walking distances to determine the required accessibility of types of open space within communities. A buffer zone was applied around every individual type of space, in order to capture the proportion within each ward within Blaenau Gwent. All residential addresses were counted within each ward, then compared to all residential address points within the County Boundary and are given as a percentage.

3.2.2 It should be noted that the open space hectareage quoted in the accessibility results table has been provided on a ward boundary basis to illustrate provision within the ward. The accessibility mapping has used FIT walking distance guideline standards to calculate the proportion of the residential population that falls within the applicable accessibility distance. Consequently, accessible open space provision in adjoining ward areas are reflected in the accessibility results.

3.3 Population Statistics and Electoral Ward data

3.3.1 Population statistics for each Electoral ward in Blaenau Gwent were obtained by using the Local Land and Property Gazetteer LLPG (British standard BS7666) to provide the number of households for each Ward within the Local Authority boundary of Blaenau Gwent. The 2021 Census figure of 2.4 people per household was then used to calculate the population per ward by multiplying the number of households by 2.4 to provide an estimated population for that ward. This population estimate was used to calculate the provision of open space per 1000 population.

4.0 Results

4.1 Quantity Formal Outdoor Space

4.1.1 The following table outlines the results of the assessment of Formal Outdoor Space provision per Electoral Ward in Blaenau Gwent. The following tables show figures for the whole Authority area and then via Ward area. Those highlighted in red indicate a deficiency according to the benchmark standards as outlined in the FIT document.

Table 4: Quantity of Formal Outdoor Space Within Blaenau Gwent

Formal Outdoor Space typology	Blaenau Gwent Total (Ha)	QUANTITY GUIDELINE (hectares per 1,000 population)	Current Quantity (hectares per 1,000 population) Population figure: 66,905	Surplus / Deficit
Playing Pitches	44.27	1.20	0.66	-0.54
All Outdoor Sport	81.24	1.60	1.21	-0.39
Equipped/designated play areas	4.12	0.25	0.06	-0.19
Other outdoor provision (MUGAs and skateboard parks)	4.62	0.30	0.07	-0.23
Total	134.25			

Table 5: Quantity of Formal Outdoor Space by Ward

Electoral Ward	Estimated Population (2021)	Total Hectares				Current Quantity (Hectares per 1000 Population)			
		Equipped play areas	Playing pitches	All outdoor sports	Other outdoor provision	Equipped play areas (0.25 per 1000)	Playing pitches (1.20 per 1000)	All outdoor sports (1.60 per 1000)	Other outdoor provision (0.30 per 1000)
Tredegar	5523	0.24	7.15	0.39	0.69	0.04	1.29	0.07	0.12
Sirhowy	5194	0.4	1.12	28.85	0	0.08	0.22	5.55	0.00
Georgetown	4023	0.46	1.11	0	0.05	0.11	0.28	0.00	0.01
Rassau and Garnlydan	3905	0.24	3.9	0.34	0.12	0.06	1.00	0.09	0.03
Ebbw Vale North	4702	0.19	6.07	10.77	0.05	0.04	1.29	2.29	0.01
Ebbw Vale South	4196	0.27	0.73	0	0.97	0.06	-0.17	0.00	0.23
Beaufort	5803	0.28	2.47	0	0.04	0.05	0.43	0.00	0.01
Cwm	3937	0.22	4.09	0.15	0.09	0.06	1.04	0.04	0.02
Brynmaur	5248	0.37	3.03	0.8	1.27	0.07	0.58	0.15	0.24
Nantyglo	4542	0.26	1.36	38.99	0.05	0.06	0.30	8.58	0.01
Blaina	4554	0.45	4.25	0.13	0.14	0.10	0.93	0.03	0.03
Cwmtillery	4448	0.09	3.83	0	0.89	0.02	0.86	0.00	0.12
Abertillery and Six Bells	6426	0.33	2.85	0.67	0.23	0.05	0.44	0.10	0.00
Llanhilleth	4404	0.29	2.31	0.15	0.04	0.07	0.52	0.03	0.01
	Total	4.08	44.27	81.24	4.62	0.06	0.67	1.21	0.07

4.2 Quantity of Informal Outdoor Space

4.2.1 The following table outlines the results of the assessment of Informal Outdoor Space provision per Ward in Blaenau Gwent. The following tables show figures for the whole Authority area and then via Ward area. Those highlighted in red indicate a deficiency according to the benchmark standards as outlined in the FIT document.

Table 6: Quantity of Informal Outdoor Space Within Blaenau Gwent

Informal Outdoor Space Typology	Blaenau Gwent Total (Ha)	QUANTITY GUIDELINE (hectares per 1,000 population)	Current Quantity (hectares per 1,000 population) Population figure: 66,905	Surplus / Deficit
Parks and Gardens	255.91	0.80	3.82	3.02
Parks and Gardens Excluding Facilities	194.93	0.80	2.91	2.91
Amenity Greenspace: Informal Amenity Areas such as managed green spaces	54.23	0.60	0.81	0.21
Natural and Semi-natural: LNR, Common Land, Woodland, Wetland, River Corridors, Priority Habitats, Other Identified Leisure Areas	5992.93	2.00	89.57	87.57

Table 7: Quantity of Informal Outdoor Space by Ward

Electoral Ward	Estimated Population (mid-year estimate Census 2021)	Total Hectares			Hectares per 1000 Population		
		Parks and Gardens (excluding facilities)	Amenity Greenspace	Natural and Semi-natural Space	Parks and Gardens (excluding facilities) 0.80 per 1000	Amenity Greenspace (0.60 per 1000)	Natural and Semi-natural Space (2 per 1000)
Tredegar	5523	73.4	5.91	602.91	13.29	1.07	109.16
Sirhowy	5194	41.33	2.82	1189.39	7.96	0.54	228.99
Georgetown	4023	0	1.64	190.65	0.00	0.41	47.39
Rassau and Garnlydan	3905	3.33	3.04	353.63	0.85	0.78	90.56
Ebbw Vale North	4702	5.79	5.62	91.97	1.23	1.20	19.56
Ebbw Vale South	4196	0	9.06	382.85	0.00	2.16	91.24
Beaufort	5803	4.61	8.26	145.79	0.79	1.42	25.12
Cwm	3937	31.91	0.99	587.42	8.11	0.25	149.20
Brynmaur	5248	3	2.48	186.89	0.57	0.47	35.61
Nantyglo	4542	1.69	2.45	356.88	0.37	0.54	78.57
Blaina	4554	5.41	3.76	437.86	1.19	0.83	96.15
Cwmtillery	4448	5.88	2.79	660.47	1.32	0.63	148.49
Abertillery and Six Bells	6426	15.24	2.79	545.31	2.37	0.43	84.86
Llanhilleth	4404	3.34	2.62	260.91	0.76	0.59	59.24
	Total	194.93	54.23	5992.93	2.91	0.81	89.57

4.3 Allotment and Community Growing Space

4.3.1 As well as surveying our open space provision, an audit has also been undertaken of the County Borough's allotment provision which, in Blaenau Gwent, is typically managed by community groups or private allotment associations.

4.3.2 While not setting a formal standard, the FIT survey work on 'other open space standards' identified the median level of provision for allotments, community gardens and urban farms in Wales as being 0.3 hectares per 1,000 population. The guidance advises that there is a need for local assessment, however, authorities may find such benchmark standards useful when considering local circumstances. The Council will therefore use this as a standard reference for such provision. Existing provision by ward is shown in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Quantity of Allotment and Community Growing Space

Electoral Ward	Quantity Guideline 0.3ha per 1,000 population (Population figure: 66,905)		
	Total HA	Current Quantity (hectares per 1,000 population) Population figure: 66,905	Surplus / Deficit
Tredegar	0.12	0.02	-0.28
Sirhowy	0.06	0.01	-0.29
Georgetown	1.62	0.30	Equals national average
Beaufort	0.35	0.05	-0.25
Rassau and Garnlydan	0	0	-0.30
Ebbw Vale North	0.47	0.08	-0.22
Ebbw Vale South	1.36	0.30	Equals national average
Cwm	2.49	0.50	0.20
Brynmawr	0.62	0.09	-0.21
Nantyglo	0	0	-0.30
Blaina	1.76	0.30	Equals national average
Cwmtillery	0.53	0.10	-0.20
Abertillery and Six Bells	3.79	0.50	0.20
Llanhilleth	0.64	0.10	-0.20
Blaenau Gwent Total Allotments	13.82	0.21	

4.4 Accessibility Formal Outdoor Space

4.4.1 The following tables outline the proportion of each Ward within the FIT accessibility walking distance guidelines and total provision of each open space typology within the ward boundary. All wards were found to have access to formal outdoor space provision within the accessibility standards. Appendix 1 to 4 show Plans illustrating the formal outdoor space provision across the borough including accessibility buffers. The accessibility results are considered further in the analysis section below.

Table 9: The Accessibility of Formal Outdoor Space by Ward

Wards	Formal Outdoor Space							
	% of Population Within 400m of Equipped Play Areas		% of Population Within 1200m of All Outdoor Sport		% of Population Within 1200m of Grass Sports Pitch		% of Population Within 700m of Other Outdoor Sport	
	Proportion (%)	Area in ward (ha)	Proportion (%)	Area in ward (ha)	Proportion (%)	Area in ward (ha)	Proportion (%)	Area in ward (ha)
Tredegar	47	0.24	97	0.39	64	7.15	73	0.69
Sirhowy	56	0.4	63	28.85	10	1.12	10	0
Georgetown	49	0.46	72	0	99	1.11	77	0.05
Beaufort	75	0.24	100	0.34	100	3.9	77	0.12
Rassau and Garnlydan	86	0.19	98	10.77	98	6.07	98	0.05
Ebbw Vale North	73	0.27	82	0	100	0.73	54	0.97
Ebbw Vale South	66	0.28	50	0	100	2.47	86	0.04
Cwm	64	0.22	77	0.15	97	4.09	68	0.09
Brynmawr	77	0.37	100	0.8	100	3.03	100	1.27
Nantyglo	86	0.26	86	38.99	100	1.36	65	0.05
Blaina	96	0.45	83	0.13	100	4.25	73	0.14
Cwmtillery	66	0.09	87	0	100	3.83	92	0.89
Abertillery and Six Bells	69	0.33	94	0.67	99	2.85	98	0.23
Llanhilleth	76	0.33	61	0.15	71	2.31	54	0.04
Blaenau Gwent Average	70		82		88		73	

4.5 Accessibility Informal Outdoor Space

4.5.1 The following tables outline the proportion of each Ward within the FIT accessibility walking distances. All wards were found to have access to informal outdoor space provision within the accessibility standards. Appendix 4 to 8 show Plans illustrating the informal outdoor space provision across the borough including accessibility buffers. The accessibility results are considered further in the analysis section below.

Table 10: The Accessibility of Informal Outdoor Space by Ward

Wards	Informal Outdoor Space					
	% of Population Within 480m of Amenity Green Space		% of Population Within 710m of Formal Park or Garden		% of Population Within 720m of Natural Semi-natural Space	
	Proportion (%)	Area within ward (ha)	Proportion (%)	Area within ward (ha)	Proportion (%)	Area within ward (ha)
Tredegar	96	5.91	97	73.4	100	602.91
Sirhowy	78	2.82	35	41.33	100	1189.39
Georgetown	52	1.64	68	0	100	190.65
Beaufort	99	8.26	72	4.61	100	353.63
Rassau and Garnlydan	94	3.04	89	3.33	100	91.97
Ebbw Vale North	99	5.62	96	5.79	100	382.85
Ebbw Vale South	99	9.06	49	0	100	145.79
Cwm	51	0.99	69	31.91	100	587.42
Brynmawr	98	2.48	97	3	100	186.89
Nantyglo	99	2.45	99	1.69	100	356.88
Blaina	92	3.76	98	5.41	100	437.86
Cwmtillery	90	2.79	89	5.88	100	660.47
Abertillery and Six Bells	66	2.79	86	15.24	100	545.31
Llanhilleth	89	2.62	66	3.34	100	260.91
Blaenau Gwent Average	86		79		100	

5.0 Analysis and Conclusions

5.1 Quantity of Formal Open Space

5.1.1 The results show that Tredegar, Sirhowy, Ebbw Vale North, and Nantyglo wards all have provision surpluses for one or more typology (as shown in Table 5 above). A summary of provision for each typology is provided below.

Equipped/designated Play Areas

5.1.2 A number of facilities contribute towards the equipped play area typology. These include LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs. Across the County Borough 19 equipped play areas meet the LAP minimum size standard of 0.01ha, 28 meet the LEAP size standard of 0.04ha, and 12 meet the NEAP size standard of 0.1ha. Overall there is a provision deficit across the equipped play area typology at County level and across all wards. The highest level of provision was in Georgetown with 0.11 ha per 1000 population and the lowest level provision being in Cwmtillery with 0.02 ha per 1000 population.

5.1.3 In terms of overall Equipped/designated Play Area provision, all 14 wards are shown to have below the 0.25ha per 1000 population benchmark standard.

Playing pitches

5.1.4 In terms of overall playing pitch provision, 12 wards are shown to have below the 1.20ha per 1000 population benchmark standard. The remaining two wards, Tredegar and Ebbw Vale North, have provision above the standard, providing 1.29 hectares per 1000 population.

All outdoor sports (non-pitch)

5.1.5 In terms of the overall outdoor sport provision, 67.84 ha of sports facilities were identified and included in this study. Of the 14 wards, 11 did not meet the 1.60ha per 1000 population benchmark standard, this is due to smaller facilities such as bowling greens and tennis courts being provided within these wards. The highest provisions provided are within the wards of Sirhowy (5.5 ha), Ebbw Vale North (2.29ha) and Nantyglo (8.58ha), which offer large sporting facilities such as golf ranges, water sports and BMX and mountain bike tracks to the wider community.

Other outdoor provision (e.g. MUGAs)

5.1.6 In terms of overall other outdoor sport provision, all 14 wards are shown to have below the 0.30ha per 1000 population benchmark standard. The highest level of provision was in Brynmawr (127ha) and the lowest level was in Sirhowy with zero provision.

5.2 Quantity of Informal Open Space

5.2.1 The results show that the overall provision of each typology of Informal Open Space across the county, is in surplus. There is a surplus of Natural and Semi-natural Space typology across all wards, however a number of wards fall below the FIT standards for Amenity Green Space (7 wards) and Parks and Gardens (2 wards). A summary for each typology is provided below.

Parks and Gardens

5.2.2 In terms of Parks and Gardens, 8 wards meet or exceed the FIT standard of 0.80ha (per 1,000 population). The largest parks in the Borough are Bryn Bach Park (61ha) and Festival Park (28ha) which provide the main facilities in the parks and gardens typology. Brynmawr (0.57ha) and Nantyglo (0.37ha) do not meet the FIT standards of 0.80ha per 1000 population. Beaufort (0.79ha) and Llanhilleth (0.76ha) fall just below the fit standard and Georgetown and Ebbw Vale South have no parks or gardens within the ward boundary.

Amenity Green Space

5.2.3 In terms of amenity space 7 wards meet or exceed the FIT standard of 0.60ha (per 1000 population). The remaining 7 wards are below the FIT standard, however Sirhowy, Nantyglo and Llanhilleth wards have amenity green space provision above 0.50 ha per 1000 population. Abertillery and Six Bells and Brynmawr Wards have less provision at 0.40 ha per 1000 population. Cwm ward has the greatest deficit against the standard providing only 0.25ha per 1000 population, this lower level of provision may be down to the structure and layout of the long narrow streets that prevent opportunities for amenity areas in and around housing.

Natural and Semi-Natural

5.2.5 Blaenau Gwent is characterised by a close association between densely urbanised communities and large tracts of open countryside. The Borough has one of the highest population densities in Wales as most of the population is concentrated in 23% of the area; in the towns of Ebbw Vale, Tredegar, Brynmawr, Blaina and Abertillery. The landscape is

characterised by the mountain masses where natural and semi-natural areas collectively provide surplus coverage with high accessibility in all wards across the borough. Tredegar, Sirhowy, Cwm and Cwmtillery wards all had the highest scores of over 100ha per 1000 population. Beaufort ward had the lowest hectareage of 25.12 ha, however this was still well above the recommended FIT standard of 2ha per 1,000 population.

Allotments and Community Growing Spaces

5.2.6 Out of the 14 Wards across the borough 5 wards met the indicative reference standard of 0.3ha per 1000 population. Cwm and Abertillery and Six Bells wards had the highest figures of 0.5ha with Blaina, Ebbw Vale South and Georgetown all meeting the 0.3ha reference standard. Two wards, Rassau and Garnlydan and Nantyglo had no allotment provision. Provision across the County Borough was below the reference standard with provision of 0.21ha per 1000 population.

5.3 Accessibility

5.3.1 In terms of formal outdoor sports the assessment identified that 60% or more of the population are within walking distance of all types of sports provision. For informal open space 90% or more of the population are within walking distance of all types of informal open spaces.

5.3.2 Overall accessibility to open space is considered to be good across the County Borough. Out of the 14 Wards, 13 consistently had a score above 50% in terms of accessibility for both formal and informal typologies of open space (see table 8 and 9 above). The ward of Ebbw Vale South had the lowest scores in the informal open space typology with 49% of the population being within 710m of a Formal Park or Garden. Ebbw Vale South also had the lowest scores in the formal open space typology with 50% of the population being within 1200m of Outdoor Sport space. This is due to there being no provision of either Parks and Gardens or Outdoor Sport within the ward itself. However, these typologies are provided within neighbouring wards and are accessible within the walking distances for approximately half the ward population.

5.3.3 The Sirhowy ward had a very low percentage of accessibility, where only 10% of the population was within 1200m walking distance of grass sports pitches and 10% of the population was within 700m walking distance of other outdoor sports spaces. While provision of open spaces within the accessibility standards is low in the Sirhowy ward, formal open space provision is higher in the neighbouring Tredegar ward which provides 3 grass sports pitches with an overall hectareage of 7.15 and 0.69 hectares of other sports provision.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1.1 The outputs of this Open Space assessment will inform the RLDP by providing mapping of the formal and informal open space typologies throughout the County Borough. The results also provide an updated baseline of open space provision by typology, identifying surpluses and deficiencies for each open space type based on the latest FIT guideline standards.

6.1.2 This assessment provides updated evidence for the application of LDP Policy DM13 Protection of Open Space and will enable existing open space provision to be shown on the Replacement LDP Proposals Map. These are the areas shown in appendix 1 to 7. Given the

local areas of deficiencies identified, this assessment demonstrates the importance of continuing to protect and provide open space in the County Borough.

7.0 Replacement LDP Policies

This assessment has provided updated evidence for the application of policies DM12 and DM13 which have been updated and reviewed for the emerging Replacement Local Development Plan. The updated draft policies are set out below alongside their respective supporting text. These policies will help to protect and secure provision of Open Space within Blaenau Gwent.

Policy DM12 Provision of Open Space and Recreation Facilities

Provision of a satisfactory standard of formal and informal open space is required on all new housing developments of 10 or more units, based on following standards:

Formal Open Space

- (a) 1.2 hectares per 1,000 population for Playing Pitches;
- (b) 1.6 hectares per 1,000 population for All Outdoor Sports (non-pitch);
- (c) 0.25 hectares per 1,000 population for Equipped/Designated Play Areas;
- (d) 0.3 hectares per 1,000 population for Other Outdoor Provision;

Informal Open Space

- (e) 0.8 hectares per 1,000 population for Parks and Gardens
- (f) 0.6 hectares per 1,000 population for Amenity Green Space
- (g) 2 hectares per 1,000 population for Natural and Semi-natural Space
- (h) 0.3 hectares per 1,000 population for Allotment/Community Growing Space provision;

The nature and type of provision will be informed by the findings of the latest Open Space Assessment and Children's Play-space Audits.

This Policy is aimed at securing the provision of adequate formal and informal open space in conjunction with all new major residential developments of 10 or more units where the development would result in a level of demand that exceeds local capacity. This Policy will help enhance the existing network of green spaces and provide increased opportunities for healthy recreation and leisure activities. A recent assessment of open space provision highlights a deficiency of formal open spaces across Blaenau Gwent (such as playing pitches, outdoor sports and children's play spaces). The provision of informal open spaces adequate at the County Borough wide level, however there are some wards that are deficient in specific types of informal open space provision. Further information is available in the Council's Open Space Assessment.

The Council has adopted the latest Fields in Trust standards and the provision of adequate open space will be assessed against the standards set out in Policy DM12. As a general rule, the provision of a satisfactory level and standard of open space will be sought on all new residential developments in line with placemaking and design requirements. For those developments of 10 or more dwellings, the amount of on-site open space provision is

calculated from the projected population of the development and the application of the minimum standard of open space provision per 1,000 population.

The exact requirements for each site will need to be agreed with the Council as local circumstances may impact the nature and type of provision required. Whilst it is preferable to provide open space facilities on-site, where this is not practicable the Council will expect the developer to provide a financial contribution for the provision of open space off-site that is appropriately located in relation to the development, or a contribution towards the upgrading of existing nearby open spaces. Similarly, contributions for the future maintenance of any open space provision will also be required to meet the needs arising from the development.

DM13 Protection of Open Space

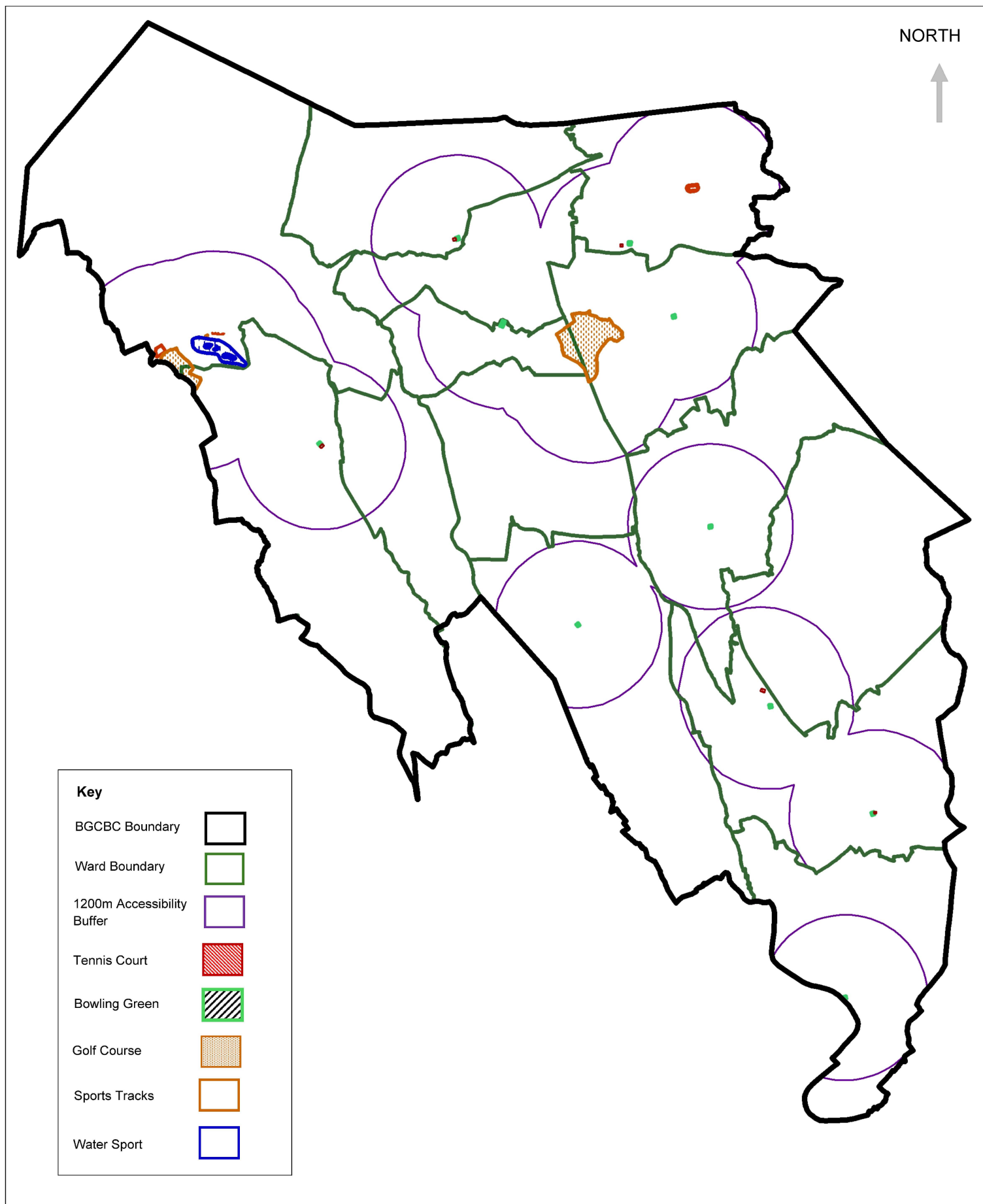
Development proposals which affect existing Open Space provision will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- (a) The site has no significant amenity, nature conservation or recreational value and;
- (b) There is a surplus of such facilities in the locality, or;
- (c) The loss can be replaced with an equivalent or greater provision in the immediate locality;
- or
- (d) The development enhances an existing facility.

Open Space includes all land that is available for use by the public for informal and formal recreational and leisure use. Open Space provision in Blaenau Gwent includes a range of urban and country parks, common land, sport and recreation grounds, recreation facilities and children's play areas as well as natural and semi-natural areas. It is recognised that all these spaces play a key role, given the largely urban population (having the sixth highest population density in Wales), offering the opportunity to improve the health and well-being of residents. Open Space in Blaenau Gwent lies both within and outside of the settlement boundaries and as such has the potential to come under significant pressure for development. Open space that has significant amenity, nature conservation or recreational value will be protected. New development will only be permitted where adequate open space would be provided, or where the proposed development would enhance an existing facility.

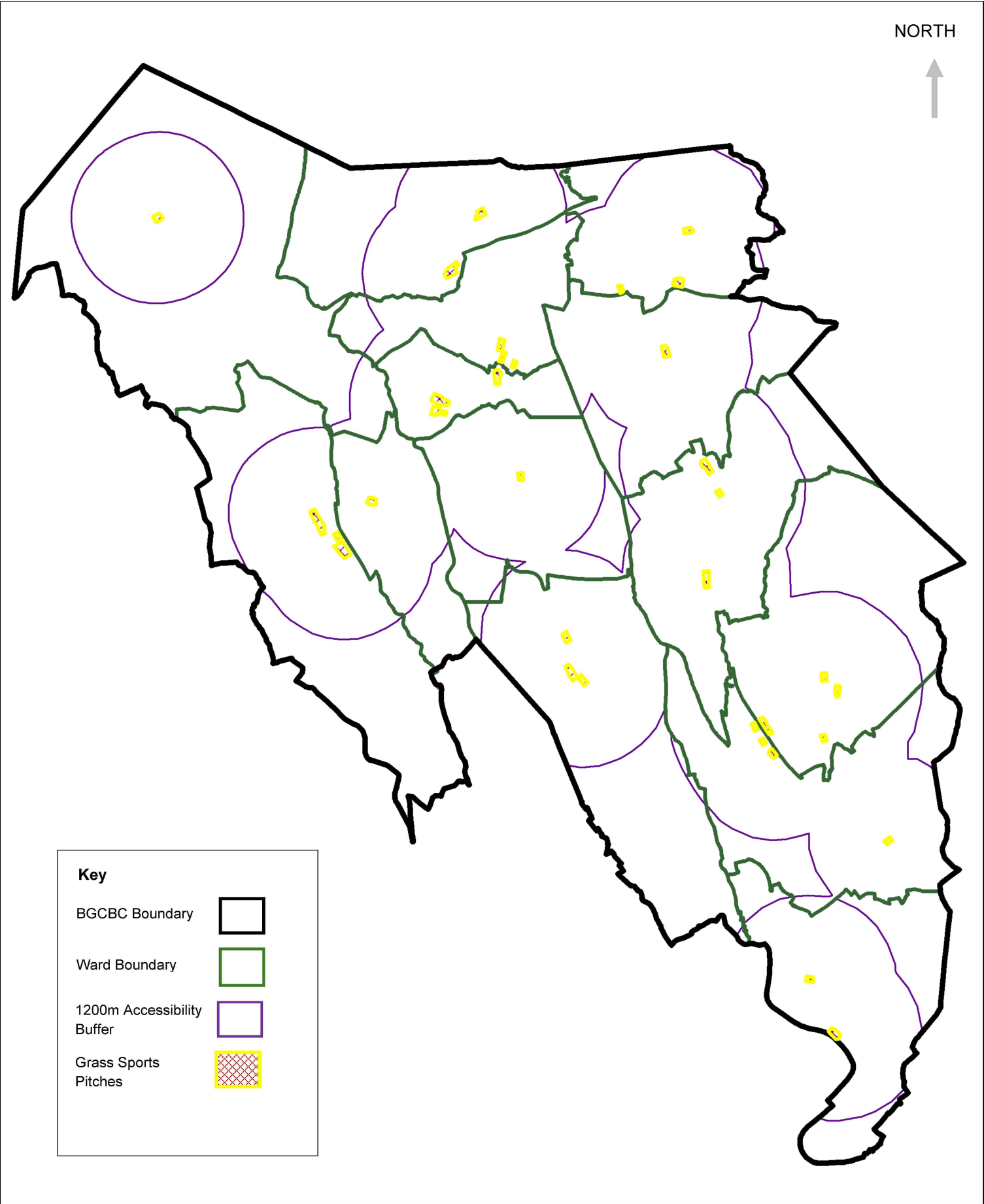
Scale: 1:73000

Title: All Outdoor Sport with 1200m Accessibility Buffer



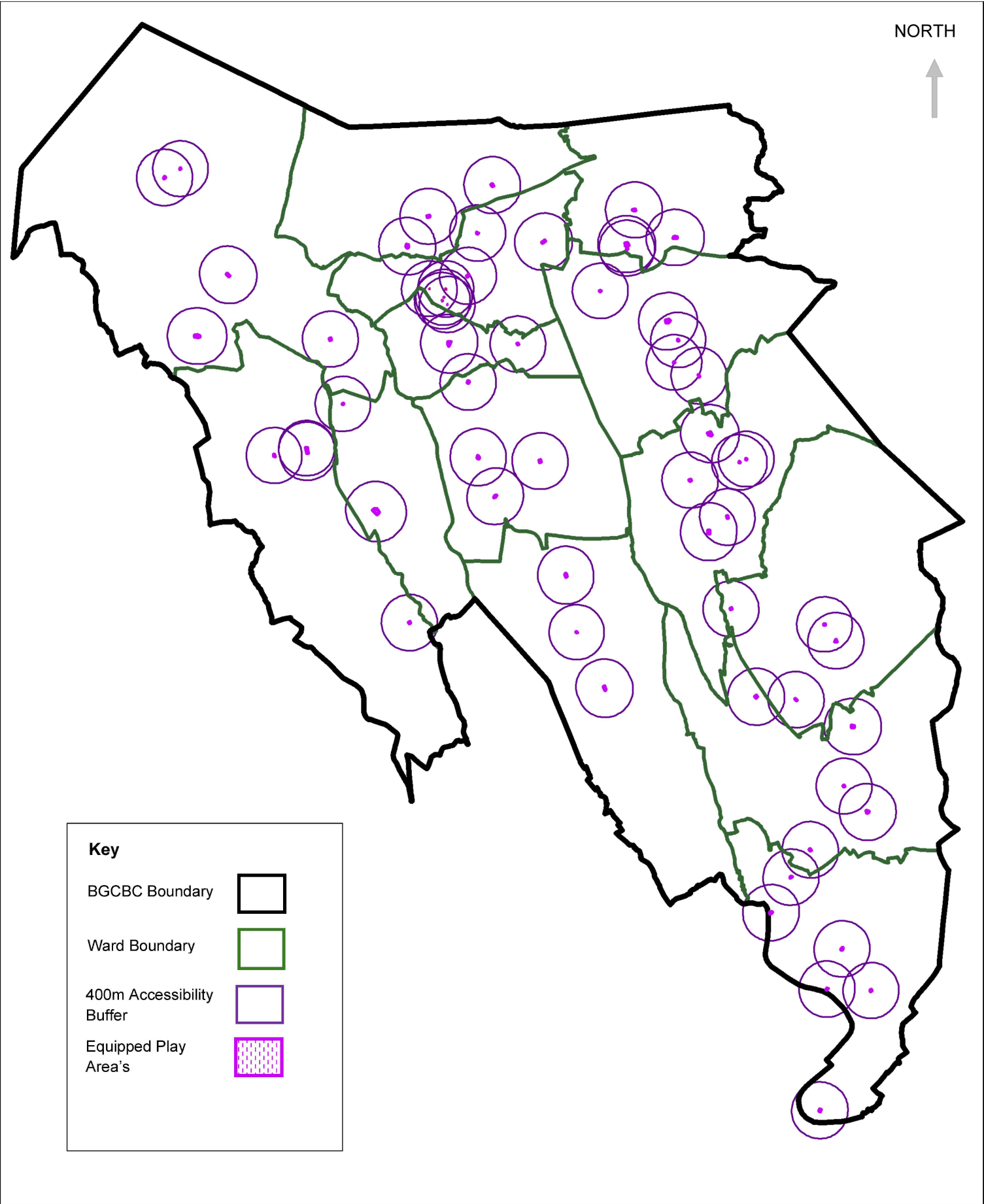
Scale: 1:73000

Title: Grass Sports Pitch with 1200m Accessibility Buffer



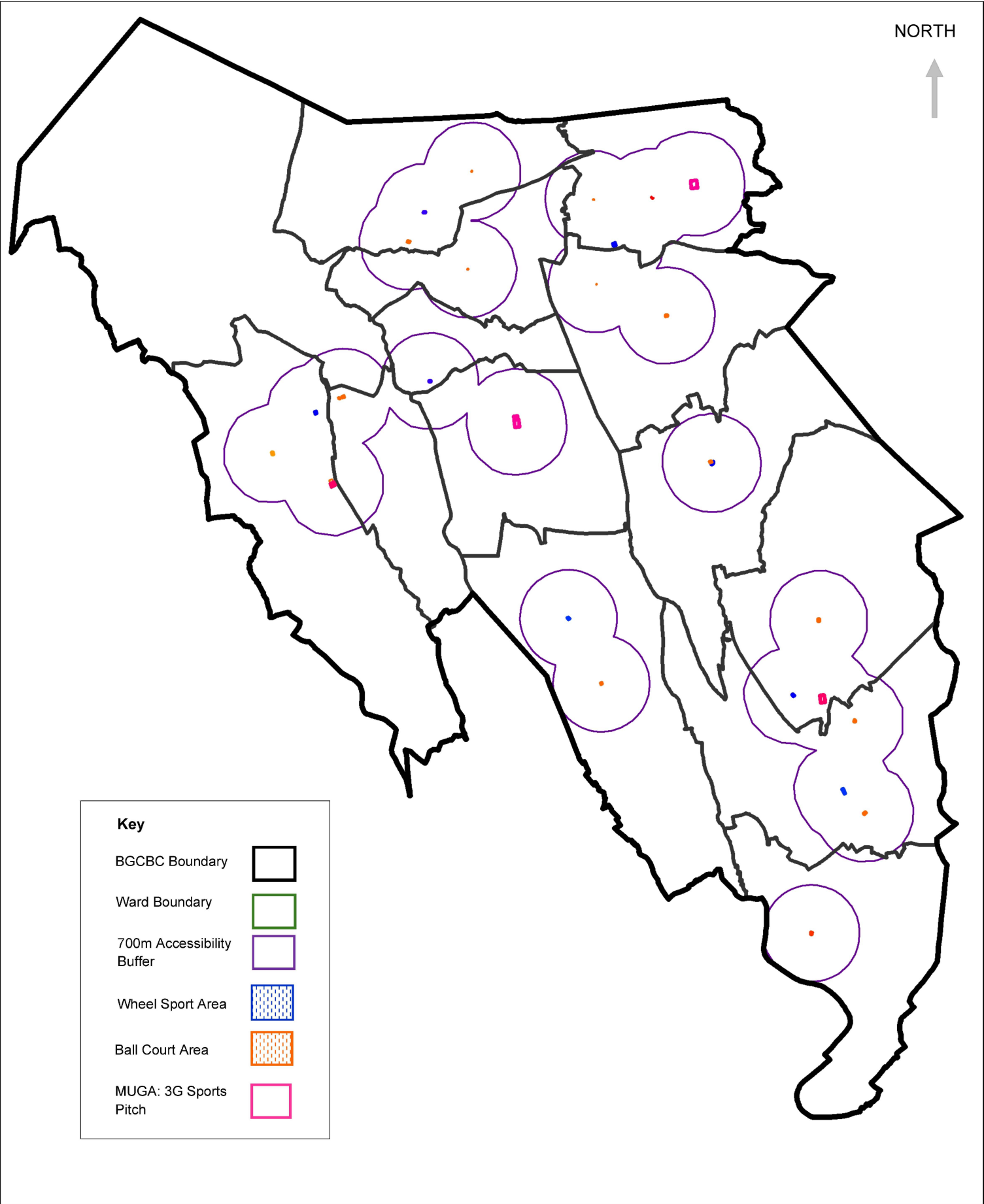
Scale: 1:73000

Title: Equipped Play Area with 400m Accessibility Buffer



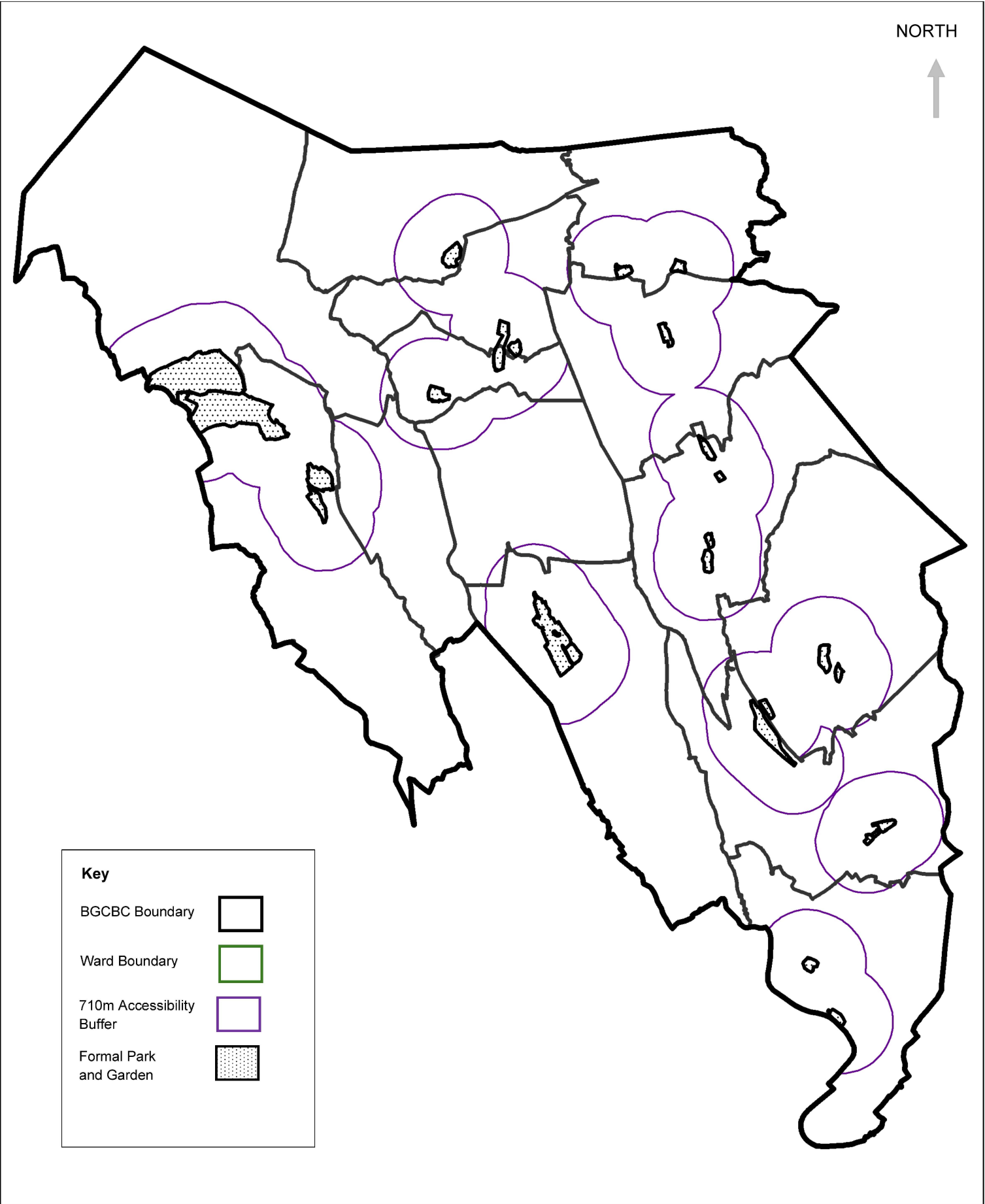
Scale: 1:73000

Title: Other Outdoor Sport with 700m Accessibility Buffer



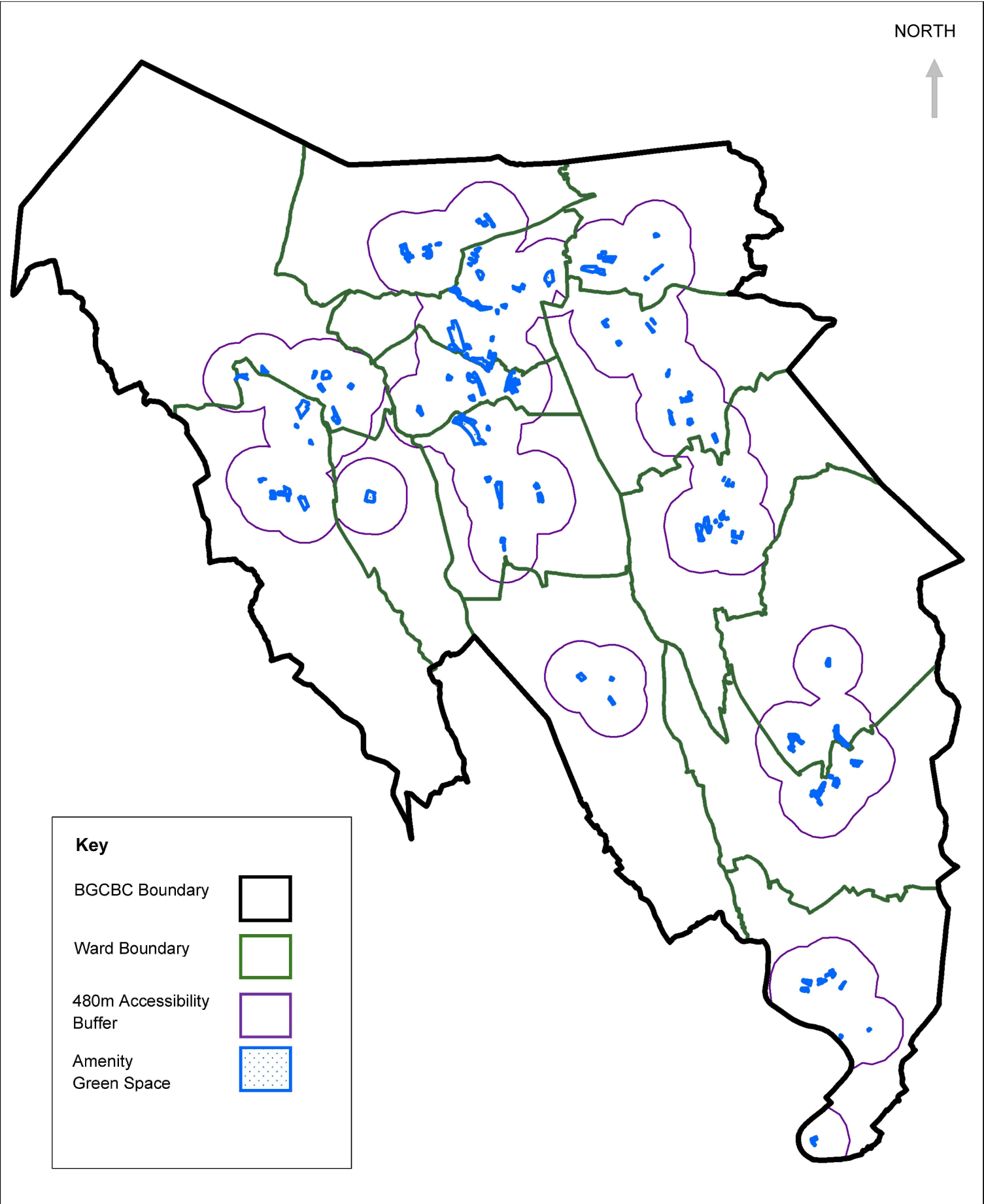
Scale: 1:73000

Title: Formal Park or Garden with 710m Accessibility Buffer

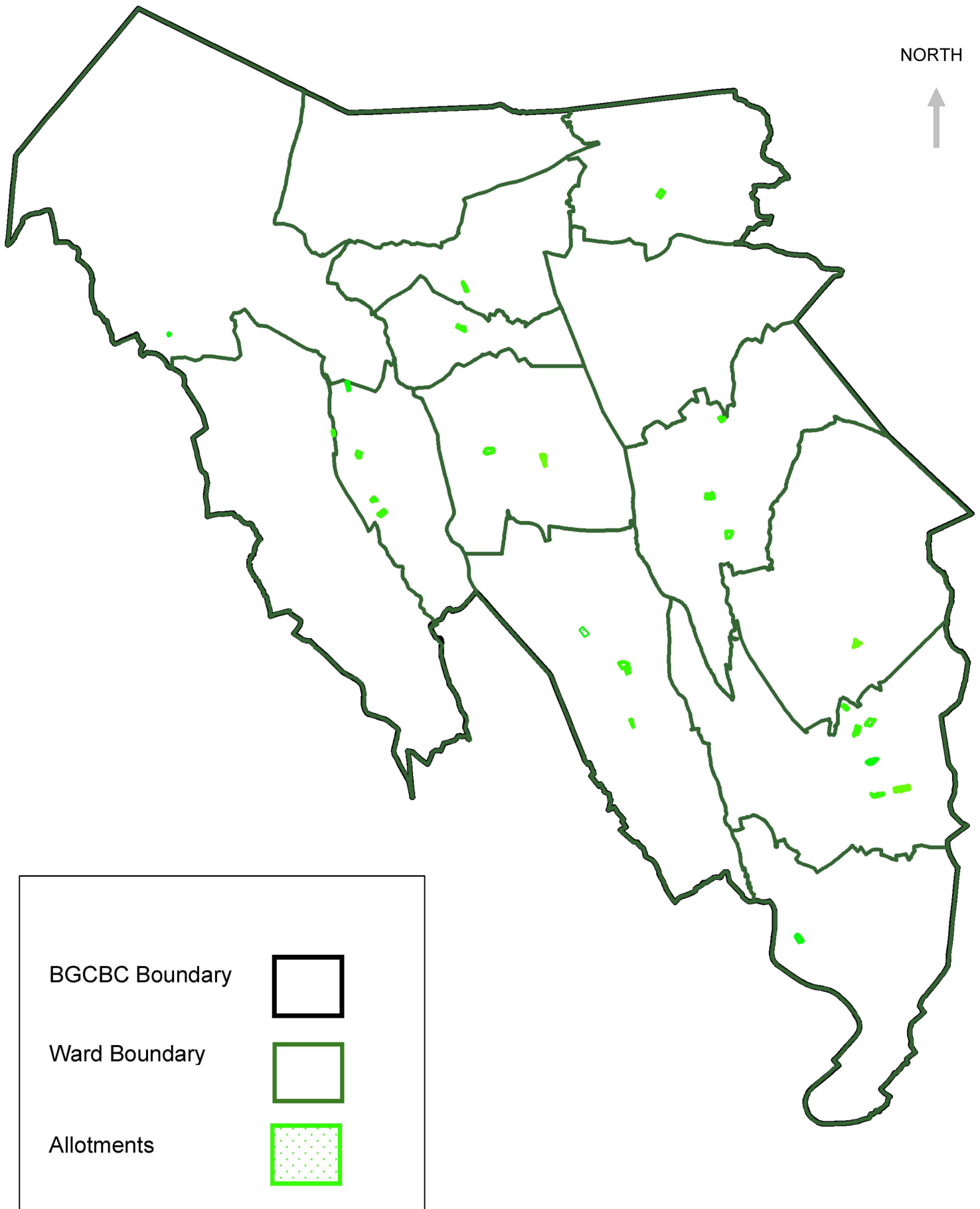


Scale: 1:73000

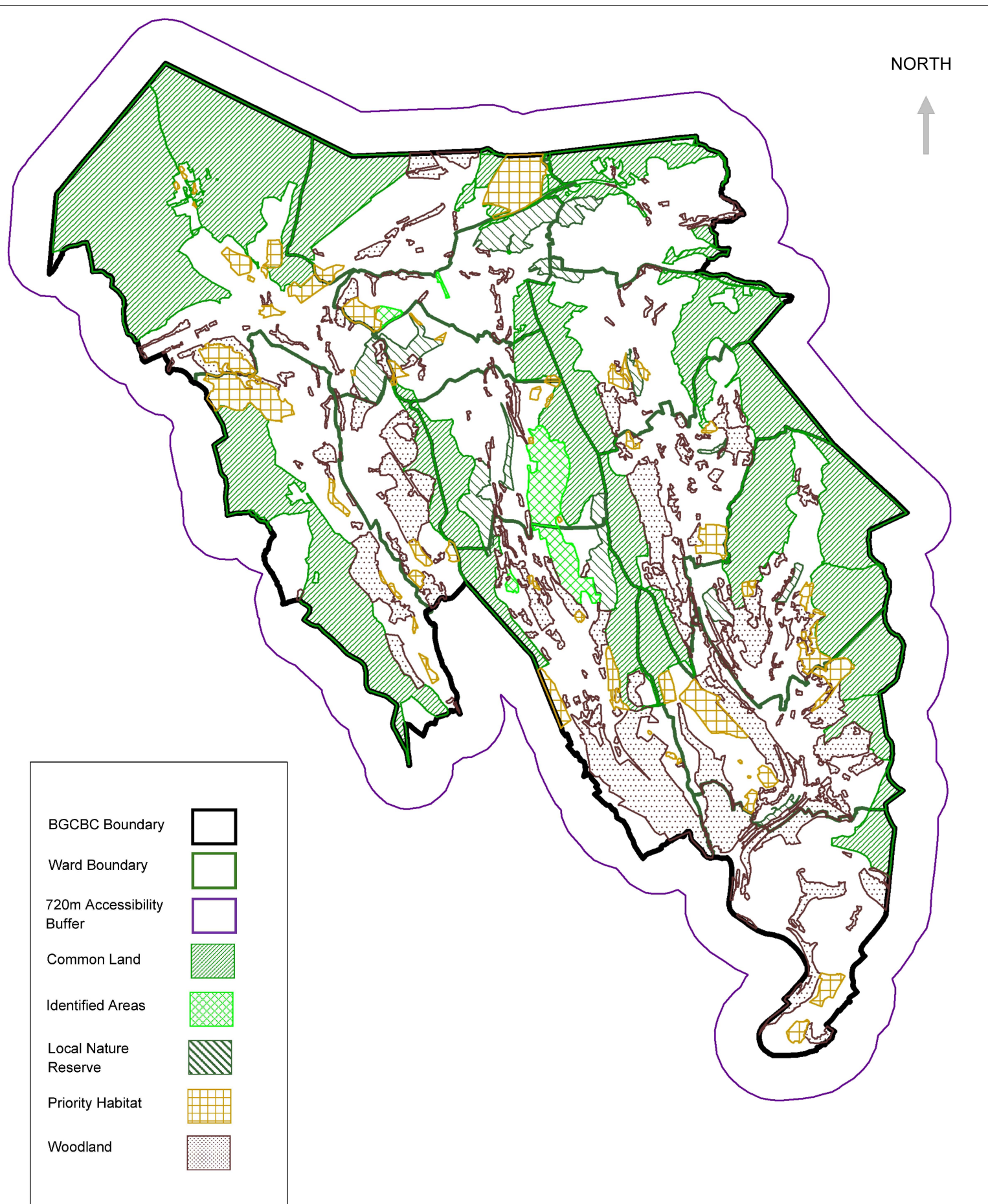
Title: Amenity Space with 480m Accessibility Buffer



Title: Allotments/Community Growing Space



Title: Natural Semi Natural Space with 720m Accessibility Buffer





Planning Policy Team

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
General Offices, Steelworks Rd
Ebbw Vale, NP23 8UW

Tel: 01495 369668

Email: planningpolicy@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Website: www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

