

Appendix 3- Accessible Natural Greenspace (ANG) Standard and Greenspace Mapping

1.0 Shropshire ANG Mapping.

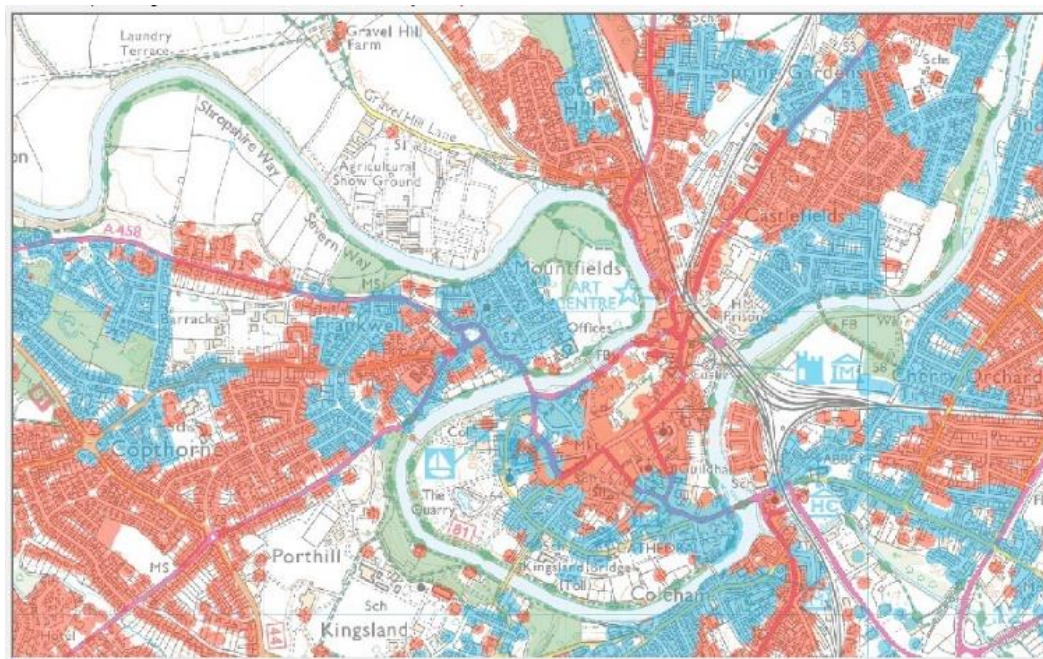
Accessible natural greenspace provides unique and important benefits for physical and mental health, wellbeing, community cohesion, sustainable transport, and biodiversity. In order to provide these benefits it is essential to have good quality, appropriately located natural green spaces. Shropshire Council's Environmental Protection team have conducted a detailed survey of the provision of natural green space in Shropshire. We have used the ANG standards set by Natural England, a robust functional definition of satisfactory provision of green space at different scales.

Natural England Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt)

ANGSt recommends that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural greenspace:

- of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home;
- at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home;
- one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home; and
- one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home; plus
- a minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population.

The first phase of the green space mapping looked in detail at how well the main towns in Shropshire met the first of the ANG standards – access to sites of at least two hectares within 300 metres. Each site meeting these criteria was mapped with all entry points marked. The 300 metre catchment was mapped by plotting all available routes to the entry points, including footpaths and alleyways. All residential addresses falling within these catchment areas were identified and filtered, and the results were used to produce the detailed town maps showing the current provision of access to natural green space.

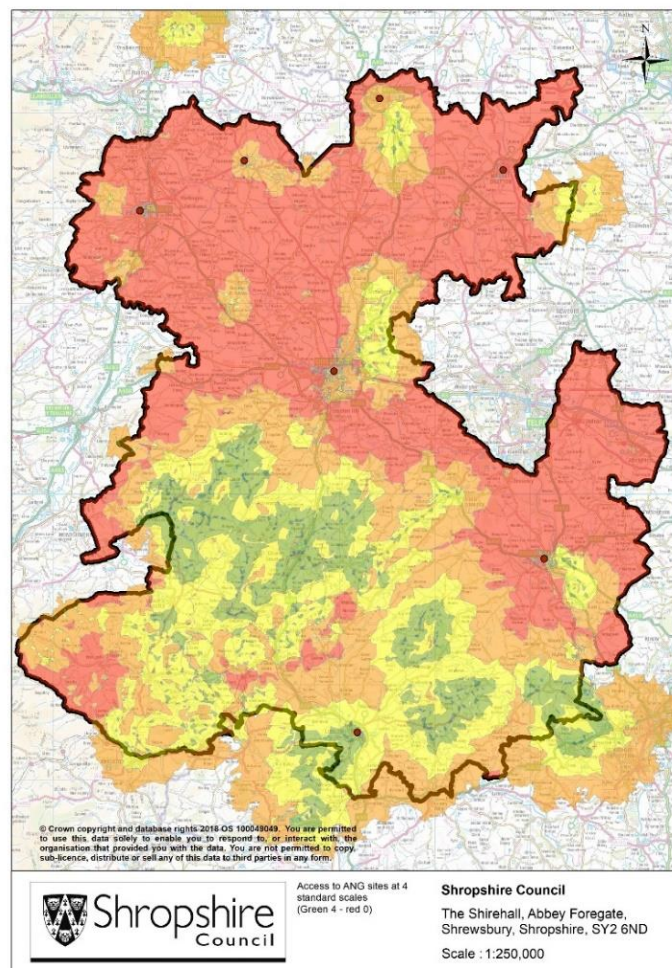


Natural green space access in central Shrewsbury:

Blue areas are within 300m of a green space, red areas are not.

For the larger sites (20, 100, & 500ha) with bigger catchments, and smaller sites in rural locations it was not practical to manually plot each route; instead the ArcGIS network analyst tool was used to generate polygons of the various catchment sizes using an existing model of the road network. Ideally these catchments would include footpaths and pedestrian routes for maximum accuracy but at the scale of the catchment size the difference in most cases would not be significant, and for journeys of over a kilometre on rural roads it is a reasonable assumption that most visitors would drive to the site. We are developing an improved version of the network analyst tool that will include footpaths in the automatic catchment mapping.

Larger sites in the 20, 100, and 500 hectare categories require several catchments at different scales. For example a 500 hectare site meets all four criteria; for people within 300m it functions as a local open space, and so on for the two, five and ten kilometre catchments. For this reason all larger sites have catchments mapped at all relevant scales to create a county-wide measure of how many households have access to green space within the 300m, 2km, 5km and 10km catchment areas.

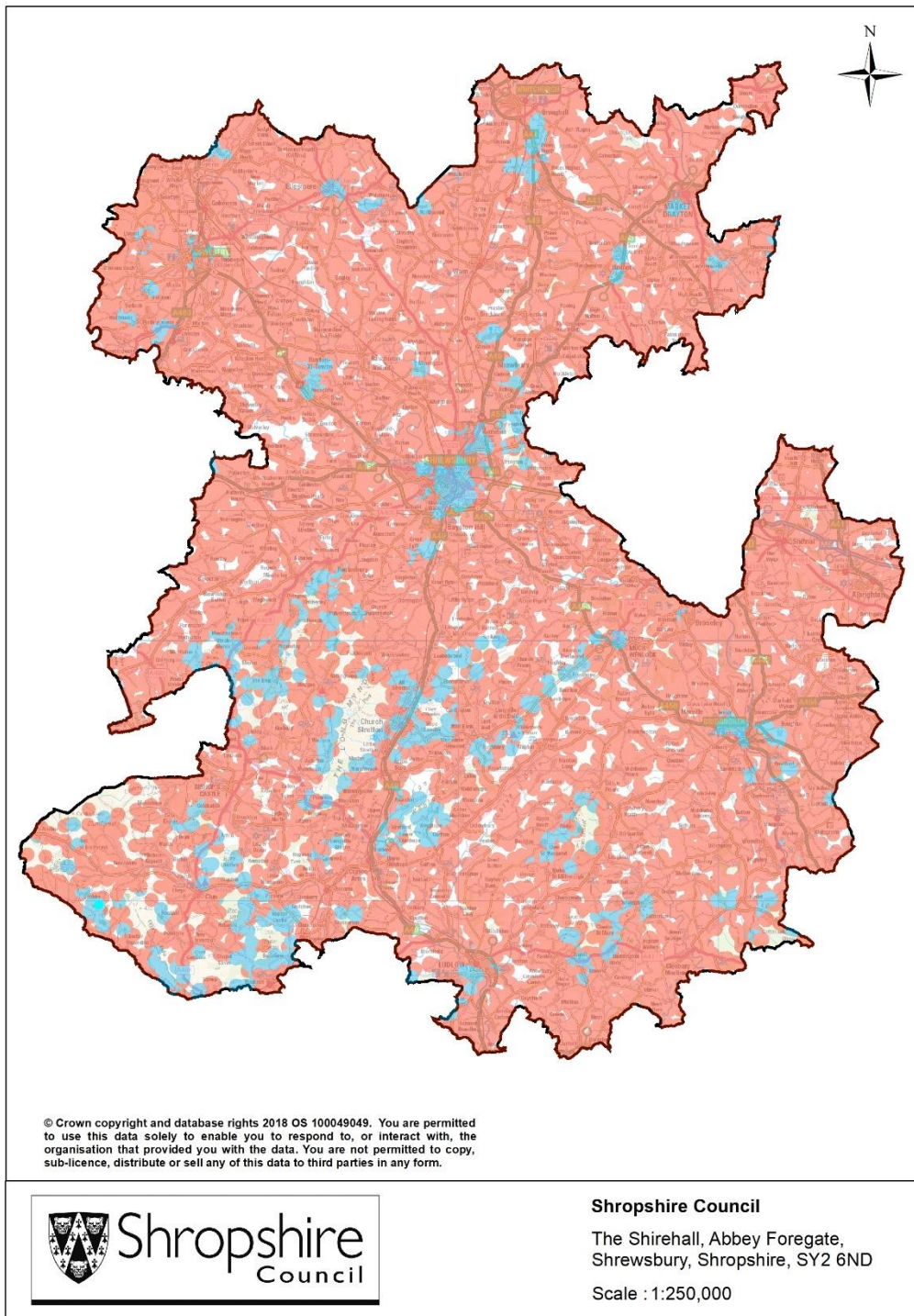


Areas covered by all four tiers of the Natural England ANG access standards.

Dark green areas meet all of the criteria at all four scales set in the ANG standards.

Red areas do not meet any of the criteria for access to green space.

The ANG mapping reveals the uneven distribution, and inadequate provision of accessible natural green space across the county. Across Shropshire only 16% of households have satisfactory access to a local green space.



Households with access to a 2ha natural green space within 300m are shown in blue.

Households with no local green space meeting this standard are shown in red.

2.0 Main findings

In broad terms the county can be seen in two halves; northern and eastern Shropshire has more intensive farming and significantly less accessible green space, and the Shropshire Hills have most of the largest green spaces because of the landscape of hills and moorland. In northern and eastern Shropshire the issue is a lack of provision; in southern Shropshire, despite the quantity of green space few sites are really accessible to all with facilities for people with limited mobility. These findings provide supporting evidence for the development of a new country park in northern/eastern Shropshire, and improved access and facilities at appropriate sites in and around the Shropshire Hills.

The detailed survey of the large towns shows that provision of green space varies and each town has specific issues, but a common finding for all of the towns is that the provision of natural green space is not sufficient to provide local access to all households.

Historically natural green spaces are almost invariably only found on land which cannot be used for building or other development and so they tend to follow the boundaries of flood plains and similar features, and the distribution and location is determined by the geography, not the demand.

The growth and expansion of the towns and villages in Shropshire from the 1950s onwards has created additional issues. The location, size and character of new green spaces was decided by the housing developers, creating a fragmented pattern of small green spaces of limited use with no overall coherence as part of a wider network. This developer-driven approach creates a legacy of token green spaces and obstructs the creation of a functional network of good quality green space; opportunities for green transport networks, wildlife corridors, and the associated health benefits from natural green space are lost.

3.0 Priorities for the future

The ANG mapping survey provides a vivid insight into the current level of green space provision in Shropshire. The work that has been done so far has become a useful resource and a starting point for a collaborative process between many different teams within Shropshire Council. It makes a clear case for adopting a different approach at a strategic planning level to creating green spaces that can support people and wildlife, and function together as a network of green transport corridors.

In support of this objective the Natural England standards will be adapted to provide a broader definition of green space, including smaller sites and other categories (formal parks, sports pitches). These will enable the creation of detailed plans for the areas where large-scale development is going to occur, to create a network of green spaces designed to deliver the maximum benefit for the community, the local environment, transport solutions and biodiversity.