



## Oldham, Greater Manchester

*Open Space Study*

AUGUST 2022  
IN8930.01.001

## Executive Summary

TEP was commissioned by Oldham Council in June 2021 to produce an Open Space Study for the Borough. The Study excludes the parts of the Borough which fall within the Peak District National Park, but includes spaces which overlap the Borough boundary (e.g. those which fall partly in the Borough).

### Introduction

Open space is important due to its valuable contribution to quality of life, health and the economy. Provision of a range of open space facilities in our towns and villages is very important in planning for a sustainable future and is embedded in national planning policy.

The evidence in this Open Space Study comprises an assessment of the quantity, accessibility, quality and value of open spaces within the Borough of Oldham, and for each of the twenty ward sub-areas. The Open Space Study has been completed using the following methodology:

- *Define the context, purpose and scope of the Study (Chapter 1);*
- *Review national and local policy (Chapter 2);*
- *Identify and map open spaces per typology (Chapter 3);*
- *Identify local needs, including consultation with key stakeholders (Chapter 4);*
- *Assess the quantity, quality and accessibility of each open space (Chapter 5);*
- *Review the provision of Other Protected Open Land (OPOL) within the Borough (Chapter 6);*
- *Develop local standards for open space provision (Chapter 7);*
- *Review current and future provision of each ward sub-area (Chapter 8); and*
- *Provide recommendations and strategy based on the evidence collected during the Open Space Study (Chapter 9).*

### Methodology

This Open Space Study is in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) for Open Space, which have replaced Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation (2002) and its companion guide, Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A companion guide to Planning Policy Guidance 17 (2002).

Indoor Sports Facilities, including education sites are not included in this Open Space Study. Outdoor Sports Facilities within education sites have not been audited.



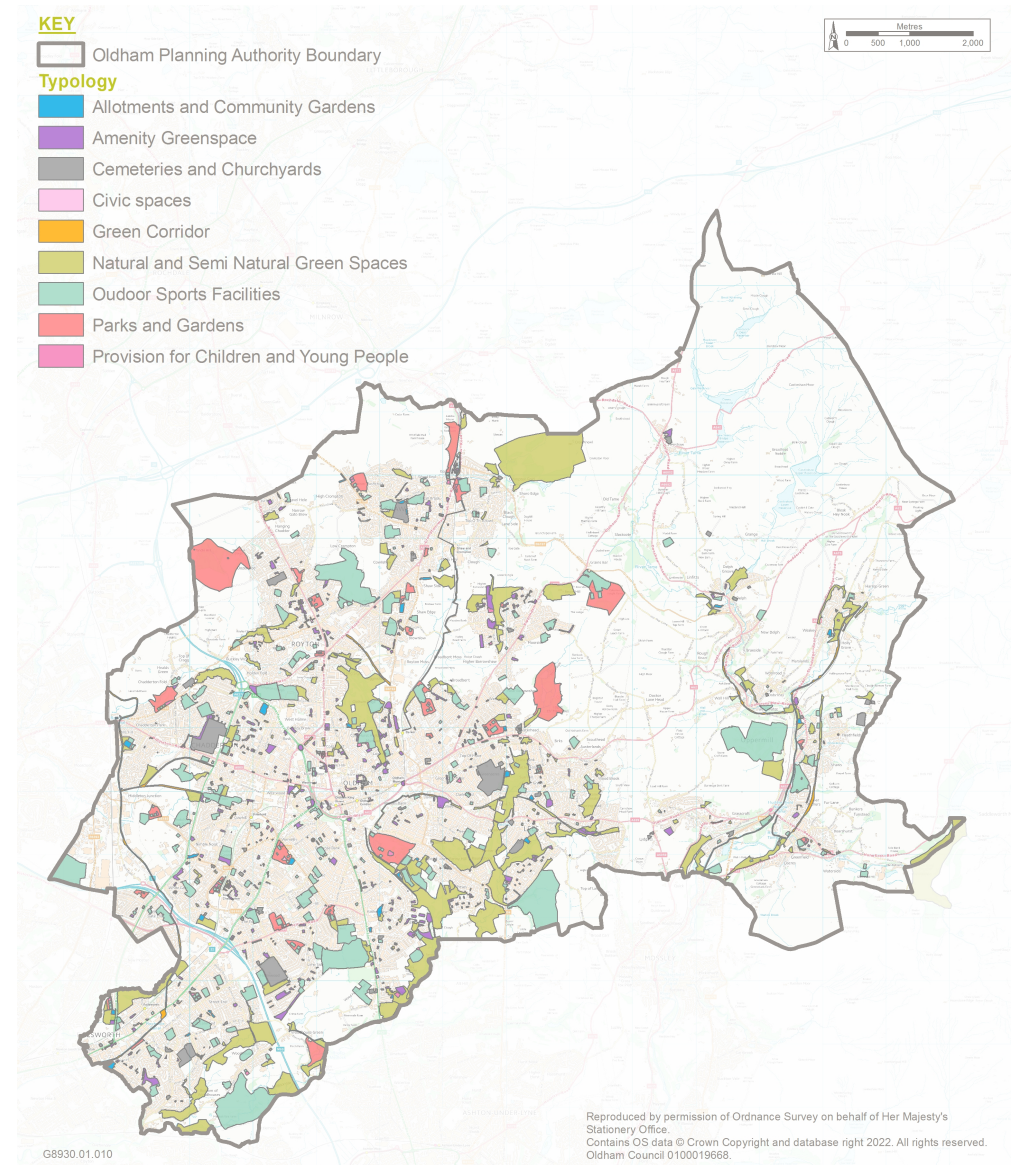
Moston Brook, Failsworth West

### Typologies

Table 1 provides a description of each of the open space typologies included in this Study.

Table 1: Open Space Typologies included in the Open Space Study

Open Space Typology	Description
Allotments and Community Gardens	Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.
Amenity Greenspace	Most commonly but not exclusively found in housing areas. Includes informal recreation green spaces and village greens.
Cemeteries and Churchyards	Cemeteries and churchyards including disused churchyards and other burial grounds.
Civic Spaces	Hard surfaced areas usually located within town or city centres.
Green Corridors	Linear natural infrastructure, such as trees and plants, that link up other green and open spaces to form a green urban network
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace	Includes country parks, nature reserves, publicly accessible woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands, wetlands and wastelands.
Outdoor Sports Facilities	Usually in the form of pitches or other sports provision, such as football, rugby or cricket pitches as well as tennis courts or bowling greens.
Parks and Gardens	Includes urban parks and formal gardens. Parks usually contain a variety of facilities and may have one of more of the other types of open space within them.
Provision for Children and Young People	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction specifically designed as equipped play facilities for young people and children.



### Open Space Provision in 2021

The current open space provision in the Borough is shown in Table 2 below. 1,159 sites are designated as open space, with a total area of 1,578.09 hectares (ha). Natural and semi-natural greenspace covers 677.97 ha and accounts for the majority of the Borough's open space provision. The total open space within the Borough equates to 6.61 ha per 1,000 population.

Natural and Semi-Natural open space accounts for 42.33% of Oldham's total open space provision. Civic spaces and Provision for Children and Young People provide the least provision at 0.14% and 0.60% respectively.

Table 2: Open Space Provisions within the Borough

Open Space Typology	Current Provision (ha)
Allotments and Community Gardens	14.93
Amenity Greenspace	90.14
Cemeteries and Churchyards	83.94
Civic Spaces	2.18
Green Corridors	38.07
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace	667.97
Outdoor Sports Facilities	478.81
Parks and Gardens	192.52
Provision for Children and Young People	9.54
<b>Final Total - rounded to two decimal places</b>	<b>1,578.09</b>



Royton Park, Royton South



Ferneyfield Road, Chadderton Central

### Quantity Assessment and Standards

The proposed quantity standards are shown in Table 3 below. Allotments and Community Gardens, Cemeteries and Churchyards, Civic Spaces and Green Corridors have no quantity standard because there is no existing Borough or relevant National Benchmark standard (Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard<sup>1</sup>, 2020).

Table 3: Proposed Quantity Standards

Open Space Typology	Proposed Standard (ha per 1,000)	Hectare per 1,000 (2021 population)	Hectare per 1,000 (2037 population)
Allotments and Community Gardens	None Set	0.06	0.06
Amenity Greenspace	0.46	0.38	0.35
Cemeteries and Churchyards	None Set	0.35	0.33
Civic Spaces	None Set	0.01	0.01
Green Corridors	None Set	0.16	0.15
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace	1.95	2.80	2.62
Outdoor Sports Facilities	1.35	2.00	1.88
Parks and Gardens	0.4	0.81	0.76
Provision for Children and Young People	0.25	0.04	0.04

Oldham Borough's 2021 population was 238,984 people. Using the proposed standards, there is a current deficiency in provision of Amenity Greenspace and Provision for Children and Young People. There is a current surplus in Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace, Outdoor Sports Facilities and Parks and Gardens. A surplus in any of the typologies does not translate directly into the land being available for development.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fieldsintrust.org/guidance>

The population of Oldham Borough is projected to grow to 254,829 people by 2037, the period proposed in Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and for Oldham's next Local Plan. When compared to the current provision of open space, this increase in population would result in a quantitative deficiency in Amenity Greenspace and Provision for Children and Young People, with a quantitative surplus of Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace, Parks and Gardens and Outdoor Sports Facilities.

Table 4 below shows the shortfall in area/head terms, based on the population projections to 2037.

Table 4: Typology Surplus and Deficiency to 2037

Open Space Typology	2021 Surplus / Deficiency (ha per 1,000)	2037 Surplus / Deficiency (ha per 1,000)
Allotments and Community Gardens	-	-
Amenity Greenspace	-0.08	-0.11
Cemeteries and Churchyards	-	-
Civic Spaces	-	-
Green Corridors	-	-
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace	+0.85	+0.67
Outdoor Sports Facilities	+0.65	+0.53
Parks and Gardens	+0.41	+0.36
Provision for Children and Young People	-0.21	-0.21

### Quality and Value Audit

Of the 1,159 open spaces in the Borough, 578 open space sites were sites selected for Quality and Value audits. The following open space types were not included in the site audits, for the reasons set out below:

- *Sites smaller than 0.2 ha (with the exception of Provision for Children and Young People). Smaller sites have limited usage compared to larger sites and have limited multi-functionality (however it is recognised they may serve some quantitative/ landscaping function);*
- *Sites larger than 10 ha as these sites are too large to record accurate information;*
- *Indoor Sports Facilities as these are not publicly accessible;*
- *Outdoor spaces associated with education sites as these are also not publicly accessible; and*
- *Inaccessible or 'land-locked' OPOL sites.*

Of the 578 open space sites included in the audit, when the site visits were carried out, 455 were assessed for Quality and Value. All remaining 152 sites were either inaccessible or unable to be surveyed for other reasons e.g. the site was developed and no longer an open space.

Open space sites which fall within OPOL sites received quality and value audits as part of the study.

413 of the audited sites were freely accessible, with the remaining 42 sites having restricted access. All 455 accessible sites received a full quality audit and ground truthing to confirm presence and review boundaries against GIS data.

The Quality and Value audits when considered together provide a robust assessment of the need for open space, including the health and wellbeing of communities, as well as for nature and to support efforts to address climate change.

The proposed quality standard is based on the Green Flag Award National Benchmark. The Green Flag Award is widely recognised as a quality benchmark for parks and green spaces, is advocated by Fields in Trust (FiT) and used by many other local authorities as part of their open space studies. Further information on the quality scores is provided in Chapter 5. The proposed bandings below align with those of the Green Flag Award;

- *Excellent - 90% to 100%*
- *Very Good - 80% to 89%*
- *Good - 70% to 79%*
- *Fair - 50% to 69%*
- *Poor - 0% to 49%*



Alexandra Park Play Area, Alexandra



Churchfields Playing Fields, Saddleworth South

### Quality Scores

Table 5 below shows the current Quality scores for the 455 scored sites. Further detailed site audit data is provided in Appendix C.

Table 5: Current Quality Scores for Audited Sites

	Number of Sites	% of Audit
Excellent (90-100%)	39	8.57%
Very Good (80-90%)	84	18.46%
Good (70-80%)	135	29.67%
Fair (50-70%)	162	35.60%
Poor (<50%)	35	7.69%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>100%</b>

The recommended quality standard is for all sites to achieve a Good Quality Score (70% or above, using the Green Flag Award benchmark).

All Amenity Greenspace, Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace and Parks and Gardens should aim for a quality score of 70% or more. Allotments and Community Gardens and Provisions for Children and Young People should use the scoring criteria to improve the open space quality, as it may be difficult for these typologies to achieve a quality score of over 70%.

The following typologies do not currently meet the Quality standard of 70%:

- *Amenity Greenspace - 50 sites;*
- *Cemeteries and Churchyards - 7 sites;*
- *Civic spaces - 1 site;*
- *Green corridors - 18 sites;*
- *Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspaces - 92 sites;*
- *Outdoor Sports Facilities - 25 sites;*
- *Parks and Gardens - 3 sites; and*
- *Provision for Children and Young People - 1 site.*

### Value Scores

The value standard is based on 'Assessing needs and opportunities: a companion guide to PPG17' and was assessed by TEP's experienced Green Flag Award judges. This allows a balanced assessment of each site based on data gathered including site context, historical/heritage value, contribution to local amenity, vitality and sense of place, recreation value, play value and ecological/biodiversity value.

The value standard is:

- *High - 60% to 100%*
- *Medium - 40% to 59%*
- *Low - 0% to 39%*

Of the audited sites, a total of 197 sites (316.16ha) fall short of the Quality standard, and 121 sites (93.71ha) fall short of the Value standard.

Table 6 below shows the current value of the 455 scored sites. A full breakdown of value audit scores is provided at Appendix C.

Table 6: Current Value Scores for Audited Sites

Value Score	Number of Sites	% of Audit
High (60-100%)	190	41.76%
Medium (40-60%)	144	31.65%
Low (<40%)	121	26.59%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>100%</b>

The proposed value standard is that all open space sites obtain a minimum Value Score of 40% above (Medium Value), and that all flagship or destination sites obtain a Value Score of 60 or above (High Value). Flagship (or destination) sites are those which provide a range of services and encourage visitors to stay and enjoy all day.

### Accessibility Audit and Proposed Standards

Amenity Greenspace, Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspaces, Outdoor Sports Facilities, Parks and Gardens and Provision for young People and Children have been assigned an accessibility standard based on a review of benchmark standards and existing adopted standards. There is no accessibility standard assigned for Civic Spaces as there is no accessibility National Benchmark (Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard , 2020) for this typology.

The proposed accessibility standards are shown 'as the crow flies' (straight line) from an open space. This has been converted into walking time to show approximately how long it should take for residents to walk to their local open space. The accessibility standards are shown in the Table 7 below.

Accessibility buffers have been applied to sites audited which were freely accessible, and all sites which were not audited. For the purpose of this study, it is assumed that sites not audited are freely accessible. Accessibility buffers have not been applied to sites with restricted access (e.g. those which require membership or payment to visit).

Table 7: Proposed Accessibility Standards

Open Space Typology	Walking Threshold
Allotments and Community Gardens	No standard
Amenity Greenspace	720 metres (15 minute walk time)
Cemeteries and Churchyards	No standard
Civic Spaces	No standard
Green Corridors	No standard
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace	720 metres (15 minute walk) 7.85km (20 mins drive) - strategic sites over 20ha
Outdoor Sports Facilities	720 metres (15 minute walk time)
Parks and Gardens	720 metres (15 minute walk time) 7.85km (20 mins drive) - strategic sites over 15ha
Provision for Children and Young People	480 metres (10 minute walk time)

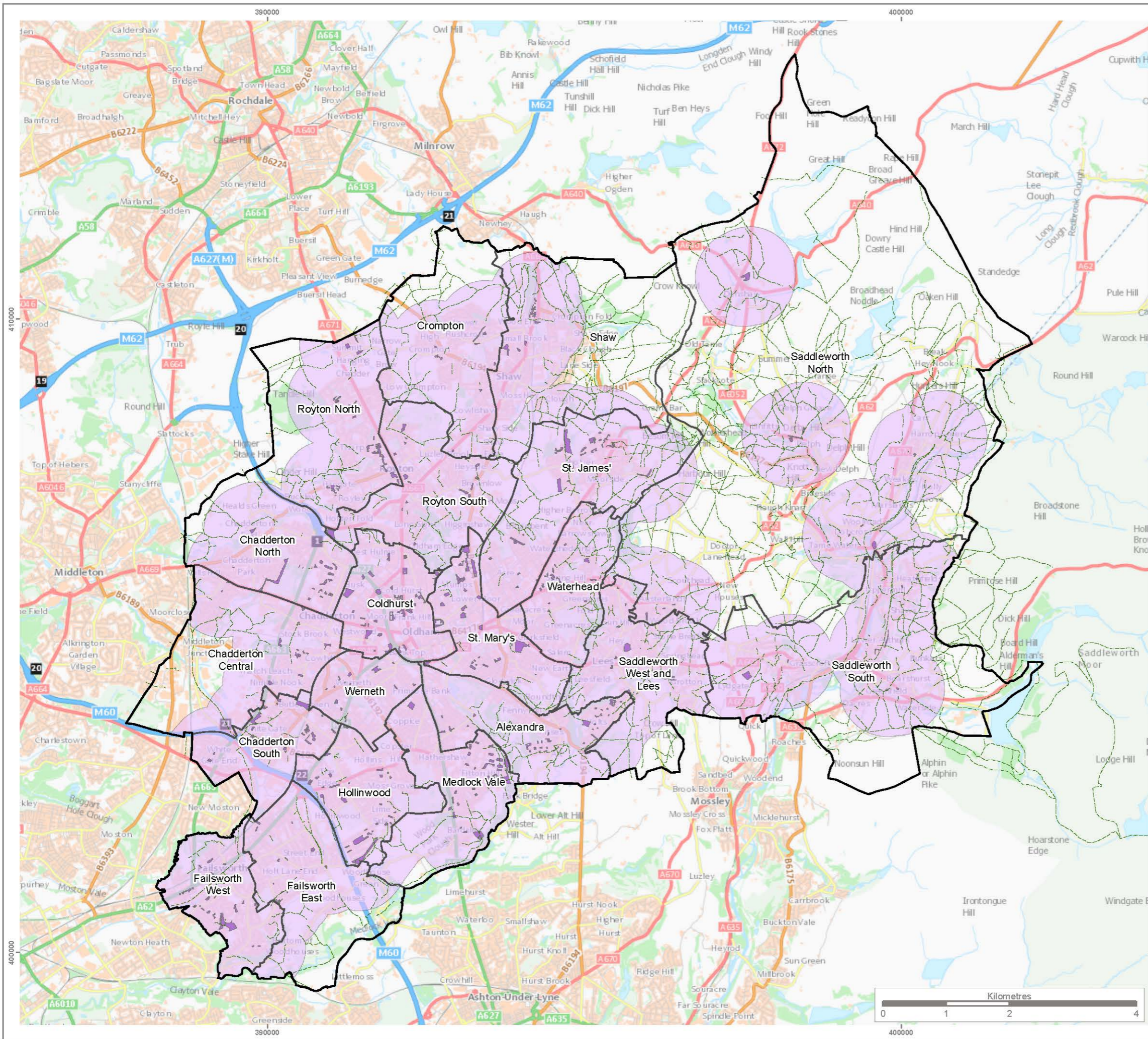
The Open Space Accessibility Maps for Amenity Greenspace, Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace, Parks and Gardens, Provision for Children and Young People and Outdoor Sports Facilities

(Excluding Golf Courses), show accessibility catchments for each open space typology and identify gaps in provision for each relevant typology. Accessibility to open space is generally higher in the urban wards. Full analysis of accessibility to open space by typology is provided in Chapter 6: Auditing Local Provision.



The following maps show the accessibility to each open space typology when applying the accessibility standard.





**KEY**

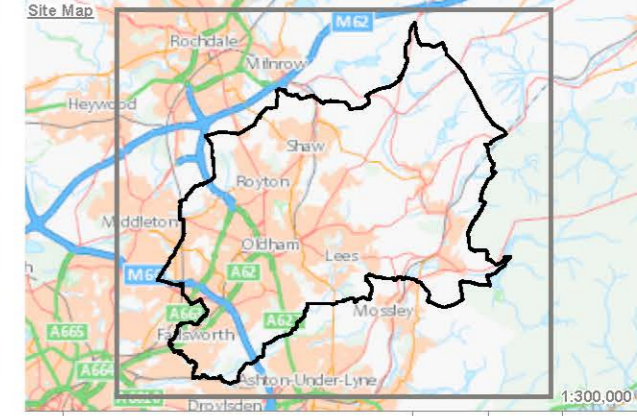
- Oldham Planning Authority Boundary
- Ward boundary
- Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

**Open Space**

- Amenity Greenspace
- Walking Threshold - 720m

Buffers are based on Existing Accessibility Standards from the 2010 Open Space Study

Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.  
 Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database right 2021. All rights reserved.  
 © 2021 Oldham Council  
 Licence number 0100019668.



Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date

**TEP** | **THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP**

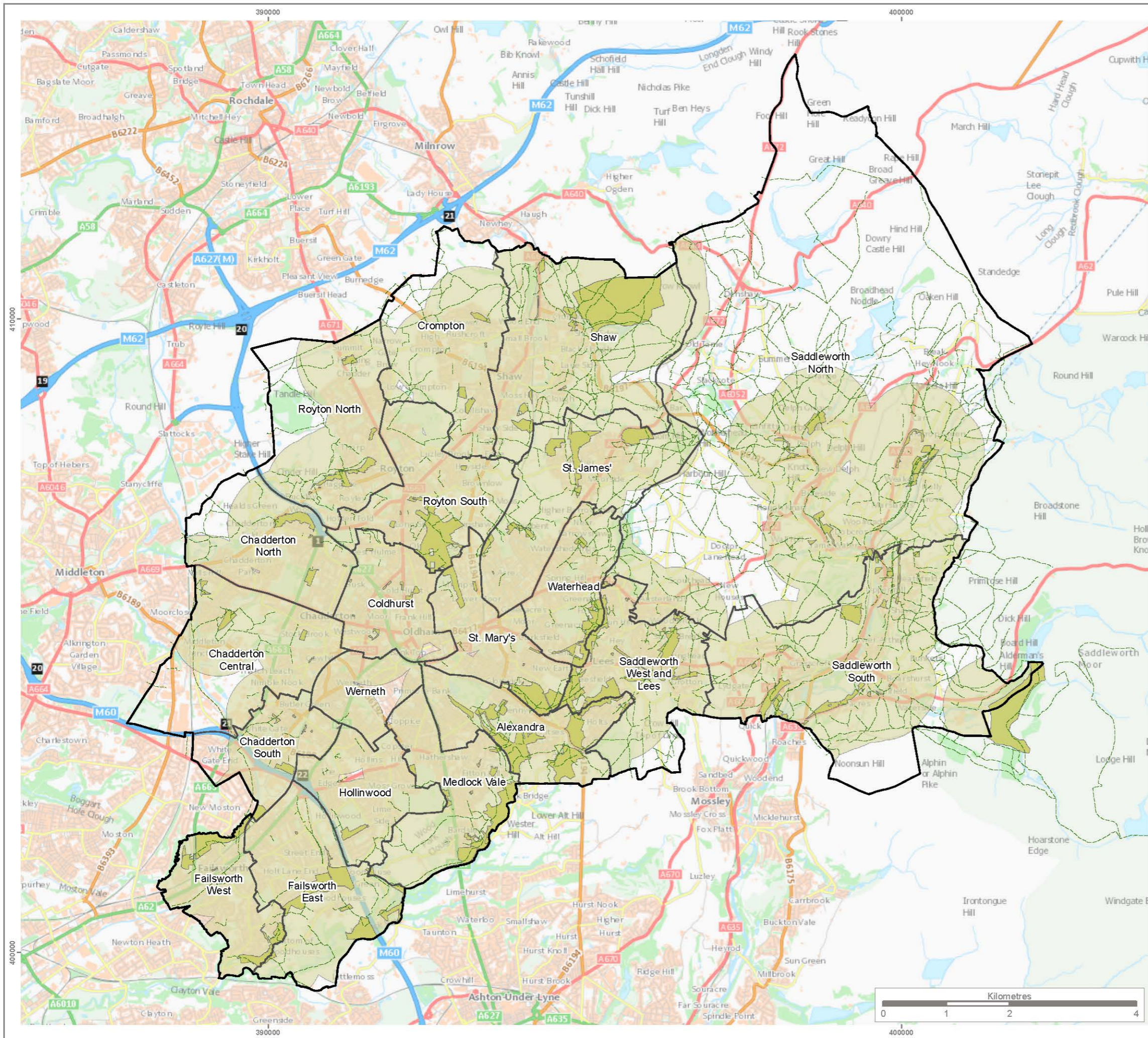
Genesis Centre, Birchwood Science Park, Warrington WA3 7BH  
 Tel 01925 844004 e-mail tep@tep.uk.com www.tep.uk.com

Project: **Oldham Council Open Space Assessment**




Title: **Open Space Accessibility - Amenity Greenspace**

Drawing Number: **G8930.01.003**



Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
SA	JO	RM	1:60,000 @ A3	15/11/2021



**KEY**

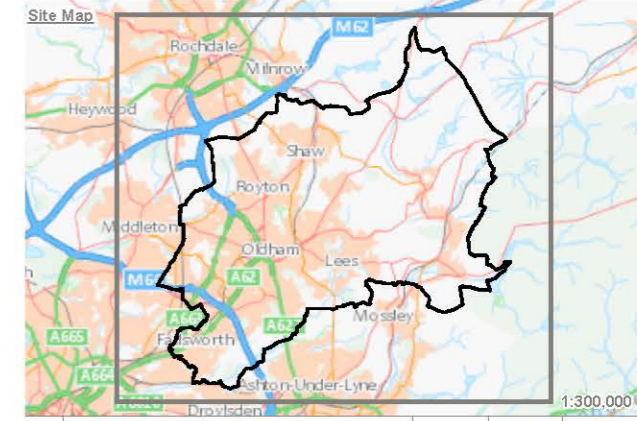
-  Oldham Planning Authority Boundary
-  Ward boundary
-  Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

**Open Space**

-  Natural and Semi Natural Green Spaces
-  Walking Threshold - 720m

Buffers are based on Existing Accessibility Standards from the 2010 Open Space Study

Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.  
 Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database right 2021. All rights reserved.  
 © 2021 Oldham Council  
 Licence number 0100019668.



Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date

**TEP** | **THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP**

Genesis Centre, Birchwood Science Park, Warrington WA3 7BH  
 Tel 01925 844004 e-mail tep@tep.uk.com www.tep.uk.com

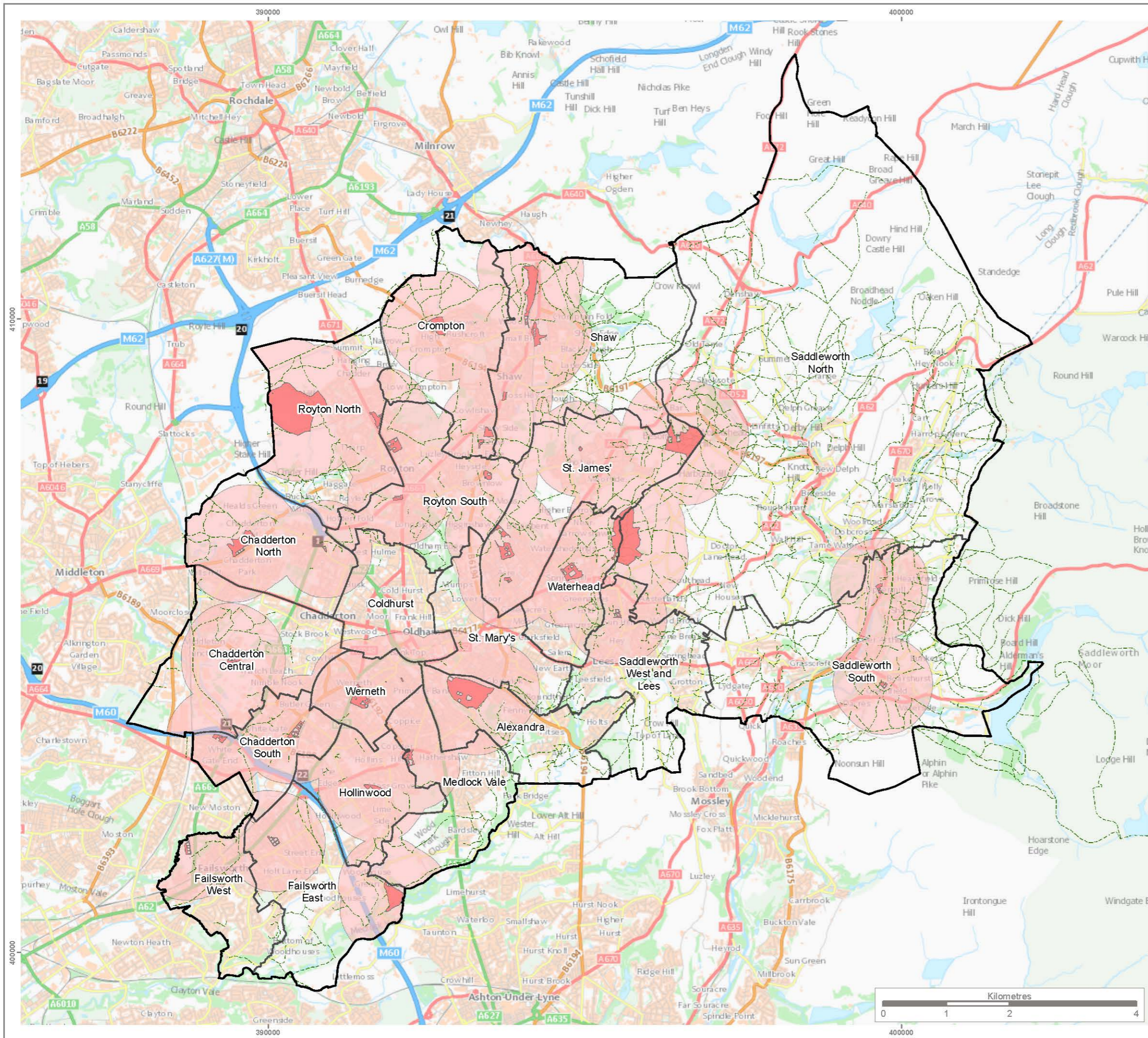
Project: **Oldham Council Open Space Assessment**

Title: **Open Space Accessibility - Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace**




Drawing Number: **G8930.01.004**

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
SA	JO	RM	1:60,000 @ A3	15/11/2021







**KEY**

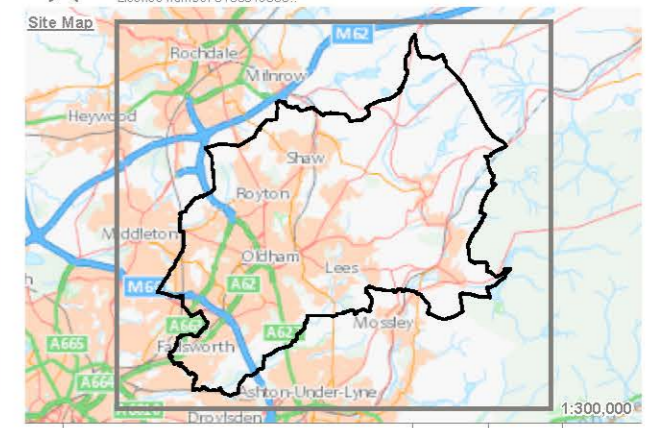
-  Oldham Planning Authority Boundary
-  Ward boundary
-  Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

**Open Space**

-  Parks and Gardens
-  Walking Threshold - 720m

Buffers are based on Existing Accessibility Standards from the 2010 Open Space Study

Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.  
 Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database right 2021. All rights reserved.  
 © 2021 Oldham Council  
 Licence number 0100019668.



Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date

**TEP** | **THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP**

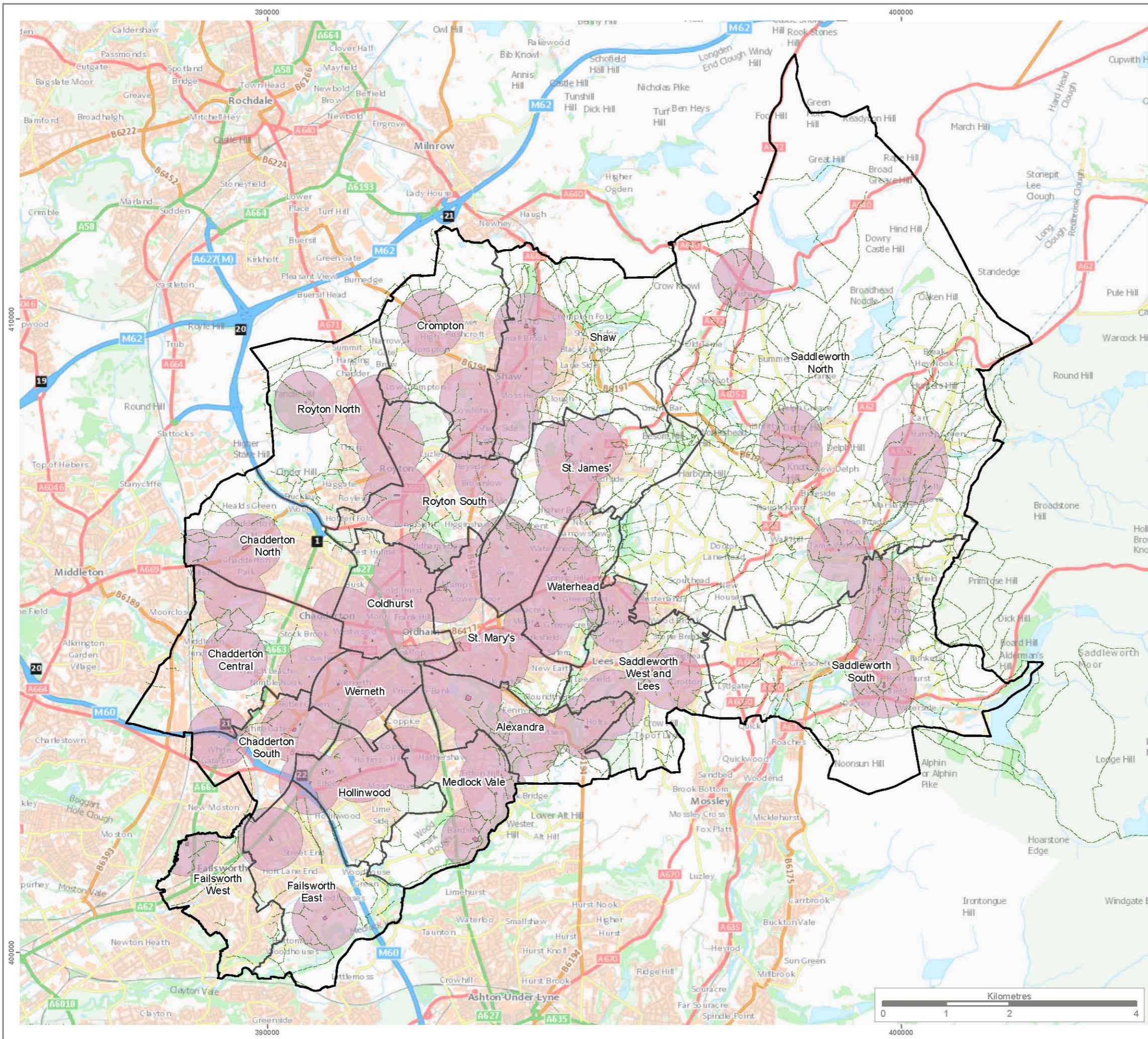
Genesis Centre, Birchwood Science Park, Warrington WA3 7BH  
 Tel 01925 844004 e-mail tep@tep.uk.com www.tep.uk.com

Project: **Oldham Council Open Space Assessment**




Title: **Open Space Accessibility - Parks and Gardens**

Drawing Number: **G8930.01.005**



Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
SA	JO	RM	1:60,000 @ A3	12/11/2021



**KEY**

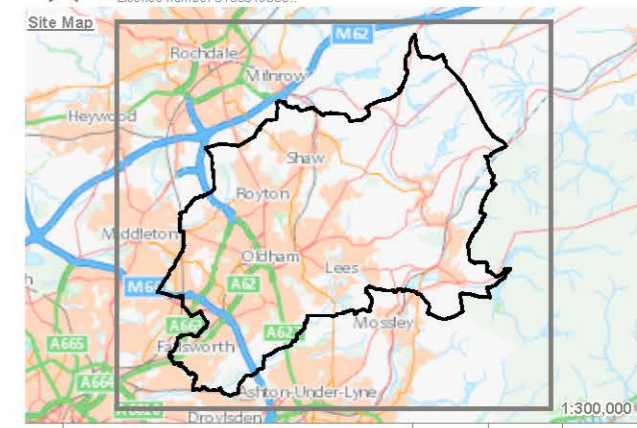
-  Oldham Planning Authority Boundary
-  Ward boundary
-  Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

**Open Space**

-  Provision for Children and Young People
-  Walking Threshold - 480m

Buffers are based on Existing Accessibility Standards from the 2010 Open Space Study

Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.  
 Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database right 2021. All rights reserved.  
 © 2021 Oldham Council  
 Licence number 0100019668.



Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date

**TEP** | **THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP**

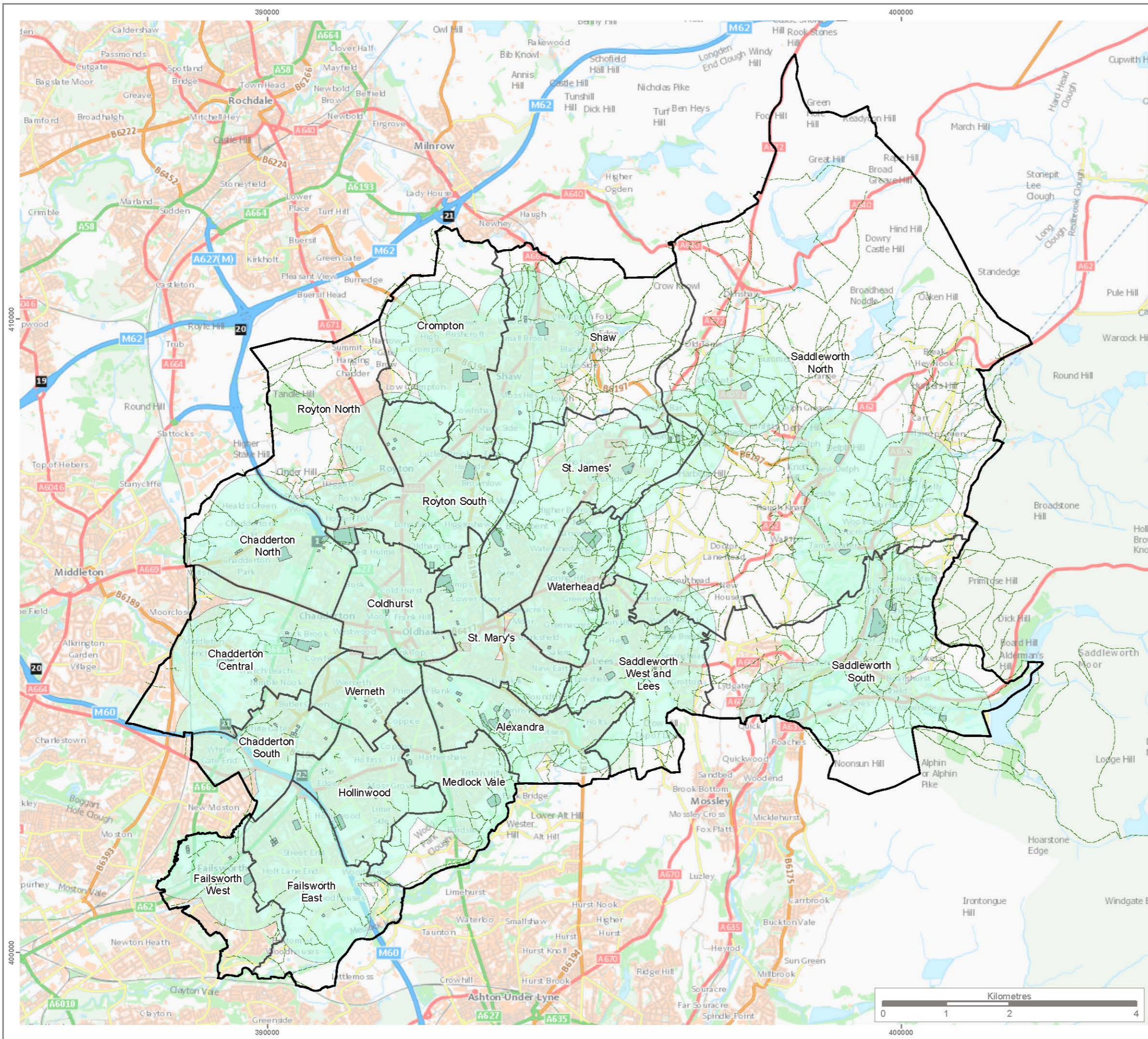
Genesis Centre, Birchwood Science Park, Warrington WA3 7BH  
 Tel 01925 844004 e-mail tep@tep.uk.com www.tep.uk.com

Project: **Oldham Council Open Space Assessment**




Title: **Open Space Accessibility - Provision for Children and Young People**

Drawing Number: **G8930.01.006**



Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
SA	JO	RM	1:60,000 @ A3	12/11/2021



**KEY**

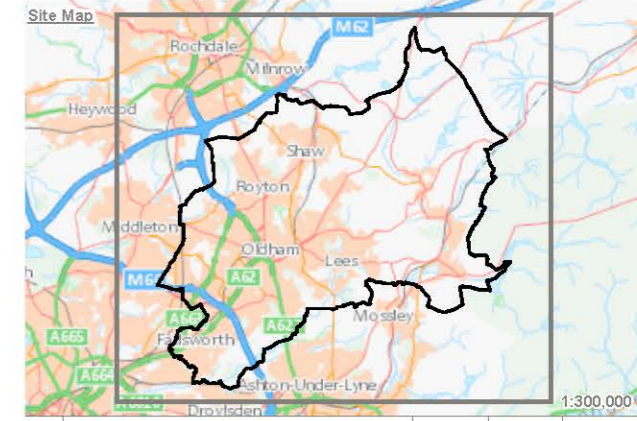
-  Oldham Planning Authority Boundary
-  Ward boundary
-  Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

**Open Space**

-  Outdoor Sports Facilities
-  Walking Threshold - 720m

Buffers are based on Existing Accessibility Standards from the 2010 Open Space Study

Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.  
 Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database right 2021. All rights reserved.  
 © 2021 Oldham Council  
 Licence number 0100019668.



Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date

**TEP** | **THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP**

Genesis Centre, Birchwood Science Park, Warrington WA3 7BH  
 Tel 01925 844004 e-mail tep@tep.uk.com www.tep.uk.com

Project: **Oldham Council Open Space Assessment**

Title: **Open Space Accessibility - Outdoor Sports Facilities (Excluding Golf Courses)**

Drawing Number: **G8930.01.007**

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
JO	JO	RM	1:60,000 @ A3	15/11/2021

## Recommendations

Full recommendations are made in Chapter 9. These include:

- Adopt the recommended standards (Chapter 7) through the review of the Local Plan including:

- Quantity standards to address deficiencies resulting from population increase and proposed development;

- Quality standards to ensure high quality spaces for all;

- Accessibility standards to ensure suitable provision of accessible open space within the Borough; and

- Value standards to ensure high value, multi-functional spaces for people and nature;

- Increase the multi-functionality of open spaces to ensure multiple functions are delivered including increasing green travel routes, opportunities for local food-growing, improving aesthetics, increasing habitat for wildlife, improving water storage opportunities and the cultural offering;

- Seek opportunities for tree planting on open spaces to assist the council in achieving carbon neutrality, support efforts to address climate change and provide valuable habitat and canopy cover;

- Produce a Supplementary Planning Document to outline open space requirements in new developments including to:

- Protect, replace or enhance open spaces impacted by development proposals;

- Implement standards proposed in this Study;

- Review local open space provision in regards to the increase in population;

- Seek funding opportunities including Section 106 Agreement, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and developer contributions; and

- Produce a Delivery Plan to address recommendations in this Study; and

- Review this Study against the Green Infrastructure Strategy to ensure a high quality network of GI within the Borough.

- Ensure Landscape Management Plans are produced to support the long-term management of new open spaces.

These recommendations are based on evidence gathered as part of this Study and provide a robust evidence base to support planning policy and to provide a mechanism against which future decision making can be made. This links directly with the requirement to develop land to meet housing needs against the need to provide sufficient high quality open space for the people of Oldham to continue to live and thrive.



Dogford Park, Royton North

**Head Office**

Genesis Centre  
Birchwood Science Park  
Warrington  
WA3 7BH

01925 844004  
tep@tep.uk.com

**Gateshead**

Office 26  
Gateshead International  
Business Centre  
Mulgrave Terrace  
Gateshead  
NE8 1AN

0191 605 3340  
gateshead@tep.uk.com

**London**

8 Trinity Street  
London  
SE1 1DB

020 3096 6050  
london@tep.uk.com

**Market Harborough**

The Reynard Suite  
Bowden Business Village  
Market Harborough  
Leicestershire  
LE16 7SA

01858 383120  
mh@tep.uk.com

**Cornwall**

4 Park Noweth  
Churchtown  
Cury  
Helston  
Cornwall  
TR12 7BW

01326 240081  
cornwall@tep.uk.com