

Access to Green Space in Urban Areas NI

In the following pages the access to green space in some of Northern Ireland's urban areas is illustrated.

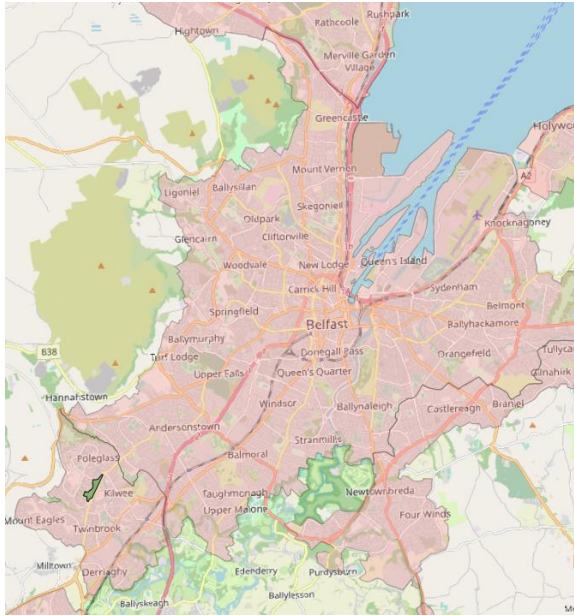


Fig1: Urban area

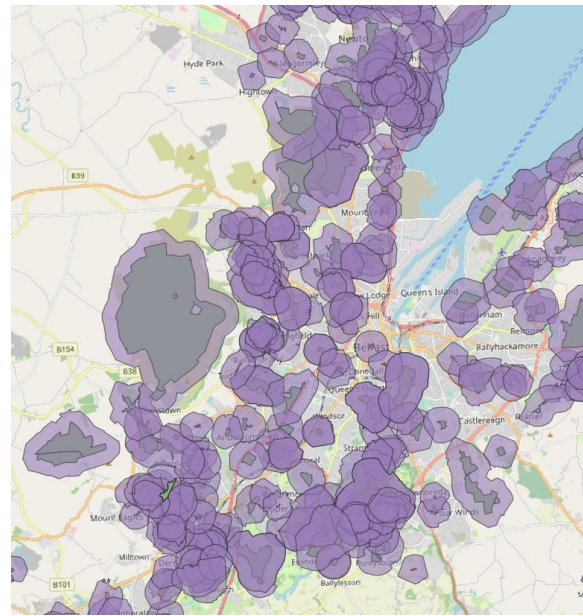


Fig2: 400m distance from green space

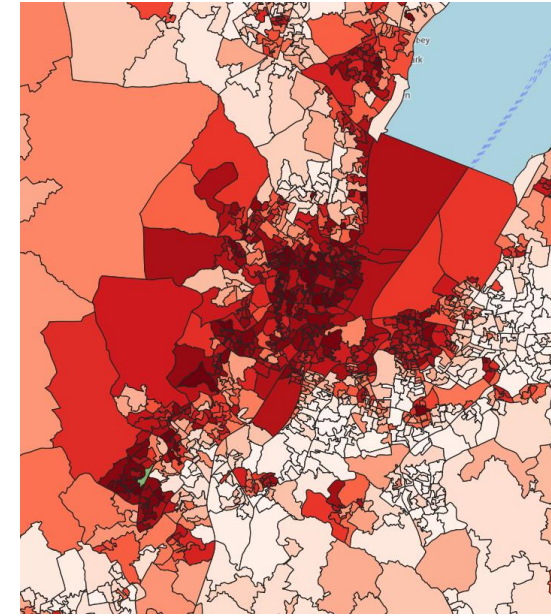


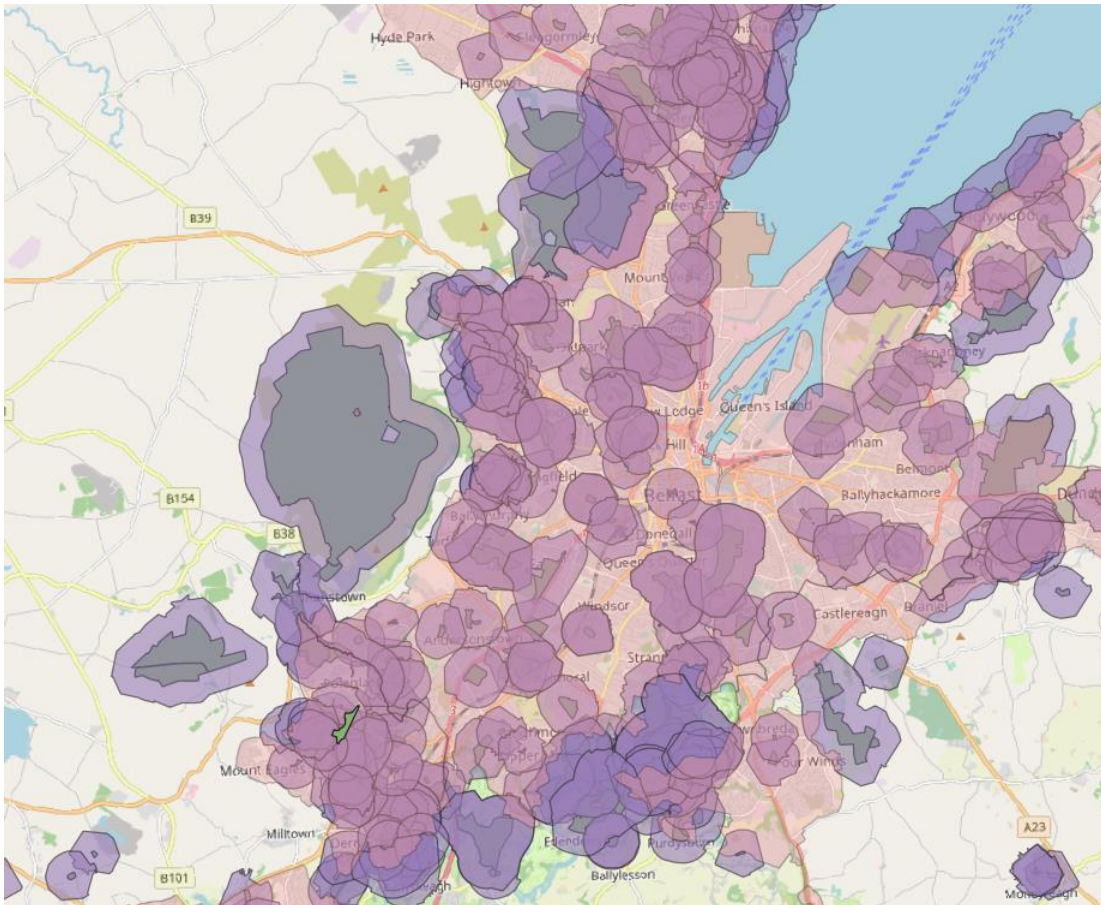
Fig3: Deprivation levels

Fig 1: The peach colour shows the extent of the urban area as defined by NISRA and follows the development limit.

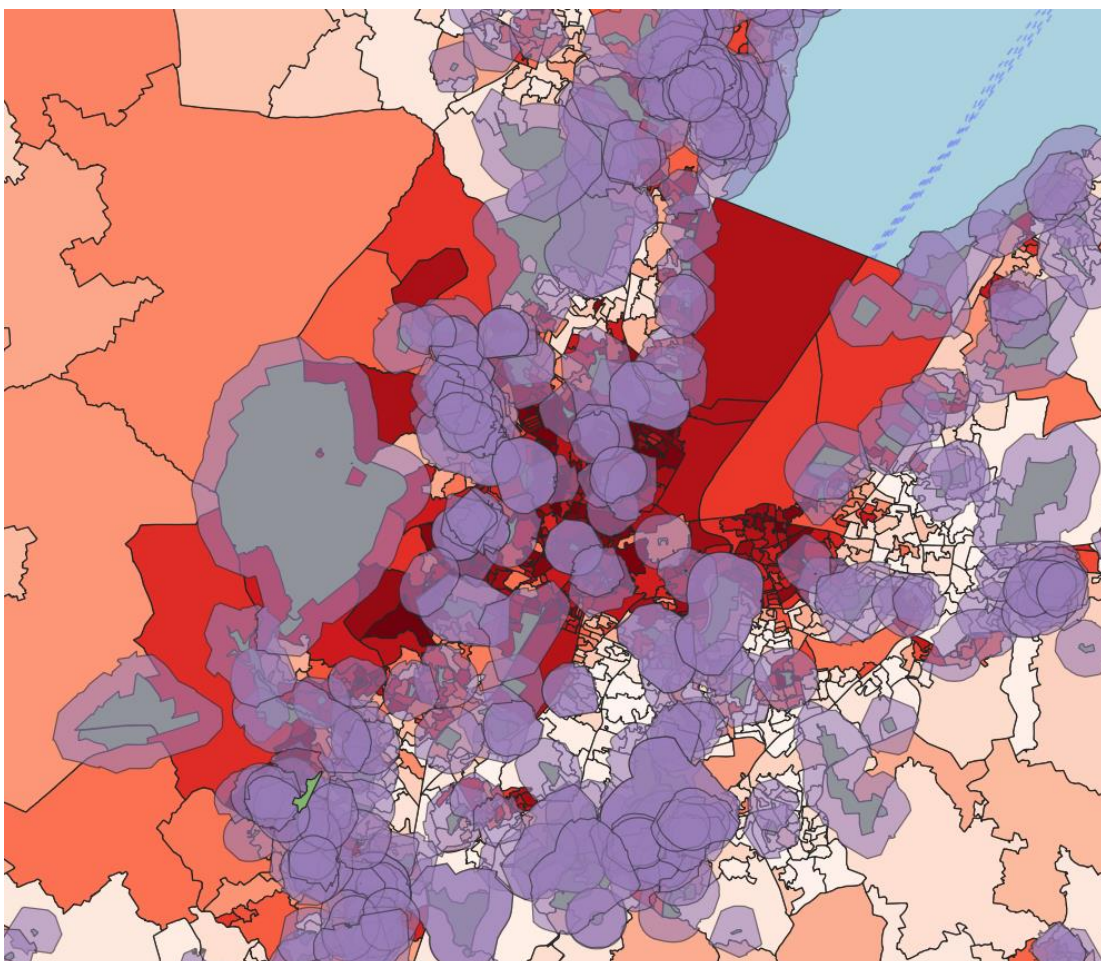
Fig 2: The purple colour represents a 400m buffer around the publicly accessible green spaces. This distance was selected as within the Belfast Open Space Strategy the recommended catchment for a local park is stated as being 400m (around a 5min walk). It should be noted that this does not take into consideration the actual entrance points to the green spaces, which may mean that for some communities the distance to enter the green space may actually be much greater.

Fig 3: The various tones of red represent the deprivation measure for each ward – with the darkest red being the most deprived areas and the lightest being the least deprived.

Belfast

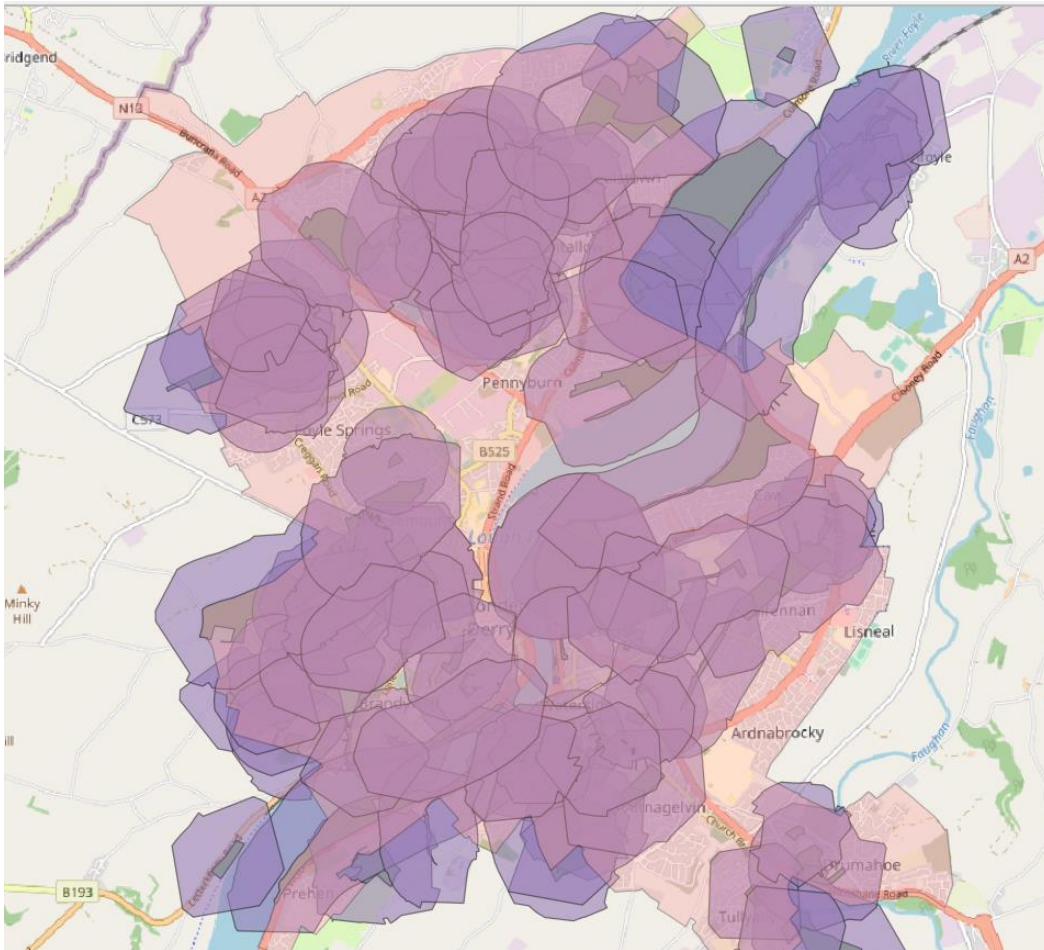


Within the Belfast City Council boundary it can be seen that although many areas have good access to public green space, there are gaps in provision. Notably the highly deprived areas of New Lodge, Falls Rd, Donegall Pass, Dargon, Short Strand, Clonard, Crumlin Rd and Upper Springfield Rd. Aerial imagery indicates very little private green space in these areas.



Some less deprived areas such as the Malone Rd, Ballyhackamore, Castlereagh and Fourwinds/ Knockbracken also have gaps in provision, however an aerial view of these areas shows that residents in these areas are more likely to have access to a private garden. Census data also indicates that these residents are more likely to own a private vehicle which would enable them to drive to green spaces.

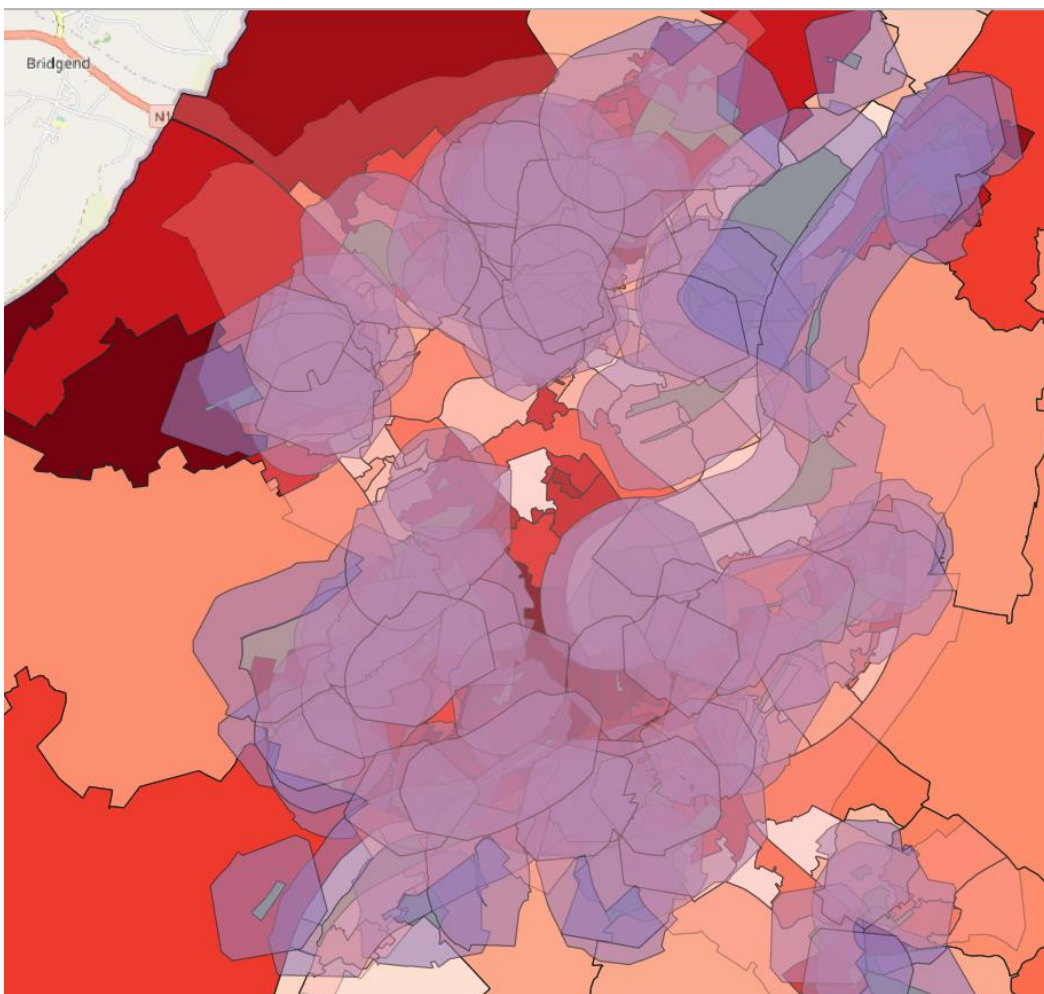
Derry/Londonderry



Within Derry/Londonderry City Council area there is a good coverage of public urban green space available to residents.

The few notable gaps in provision are the more deprived areas of Galliagh/Breagh Hill and Strand Rd. Galliagh/Breagh Hill are on the northern boundary of the city and have private gardens and countryside beyond. A large section of the Strand Rd area is the Magee Campus which does have green space within their grounds. This green space is not officially public access, but is often used by more than just the student population.

Other less deprived areas which do not have access to green space within 400m is Ardnambrocky, Altnagelvin/Lisagh more and Fincarn/Drumahoo on the edge of the city boundary. Satellite imagery of these houses shows large gardens with the wider countryside nearby.

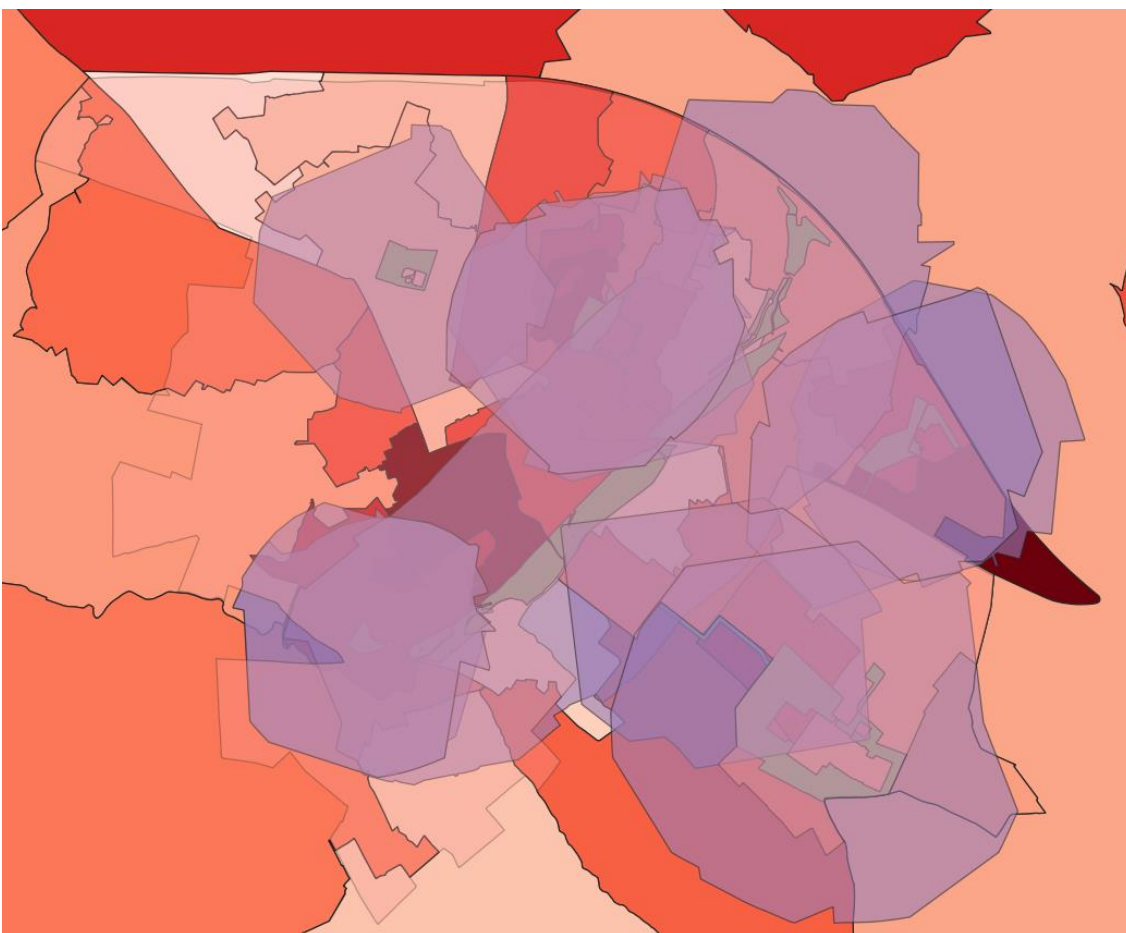
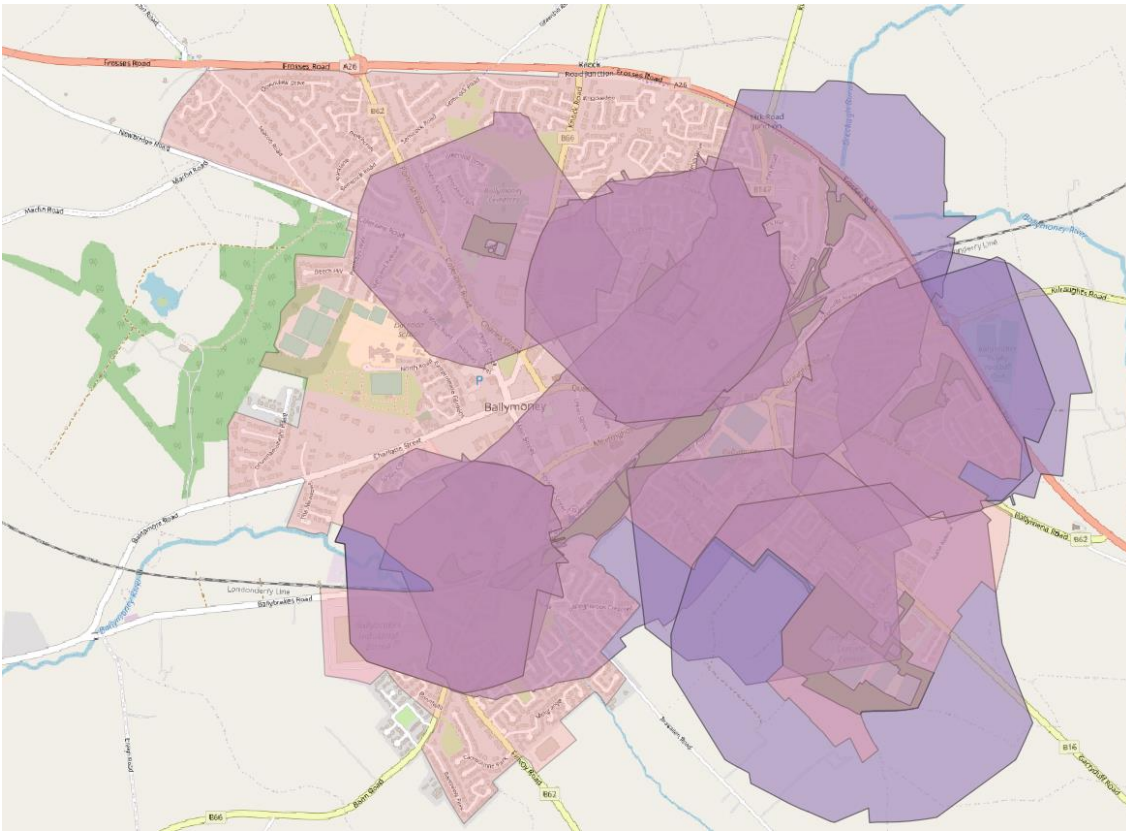


On the next few pages the medium sized towns of Ballymoney, Dungannon, Newtownards and Omagh are shown.

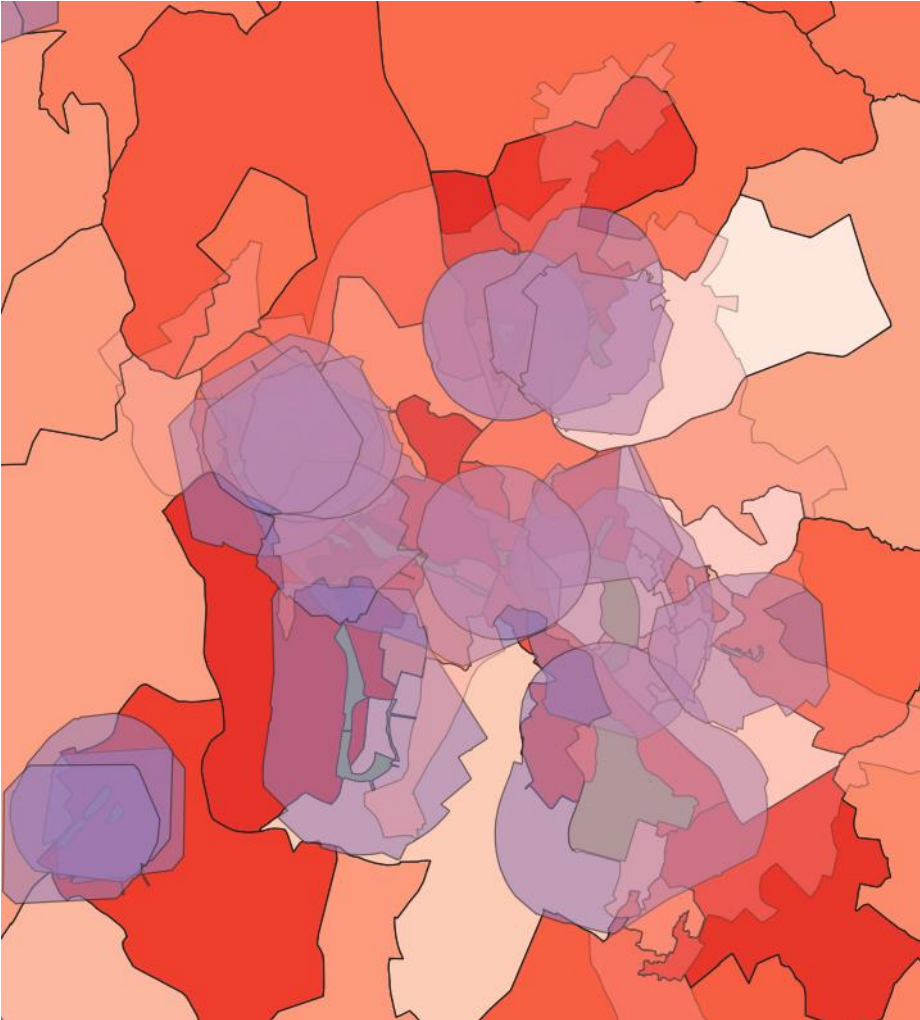
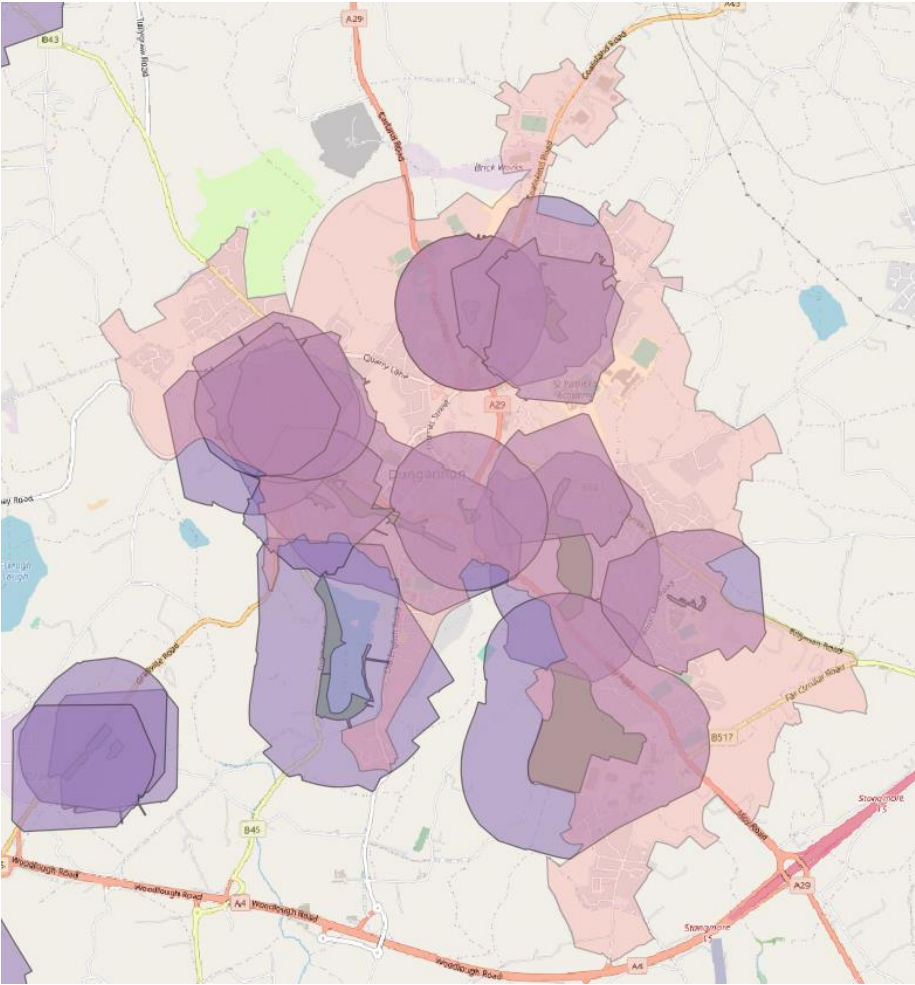
For all these towns there are large sections that have no publicly accessible green space within 400m. No correlation was observed between level of deprivation and access to public green spaces.

In contrast to the Cities examined the majority of houses have their own private gardens

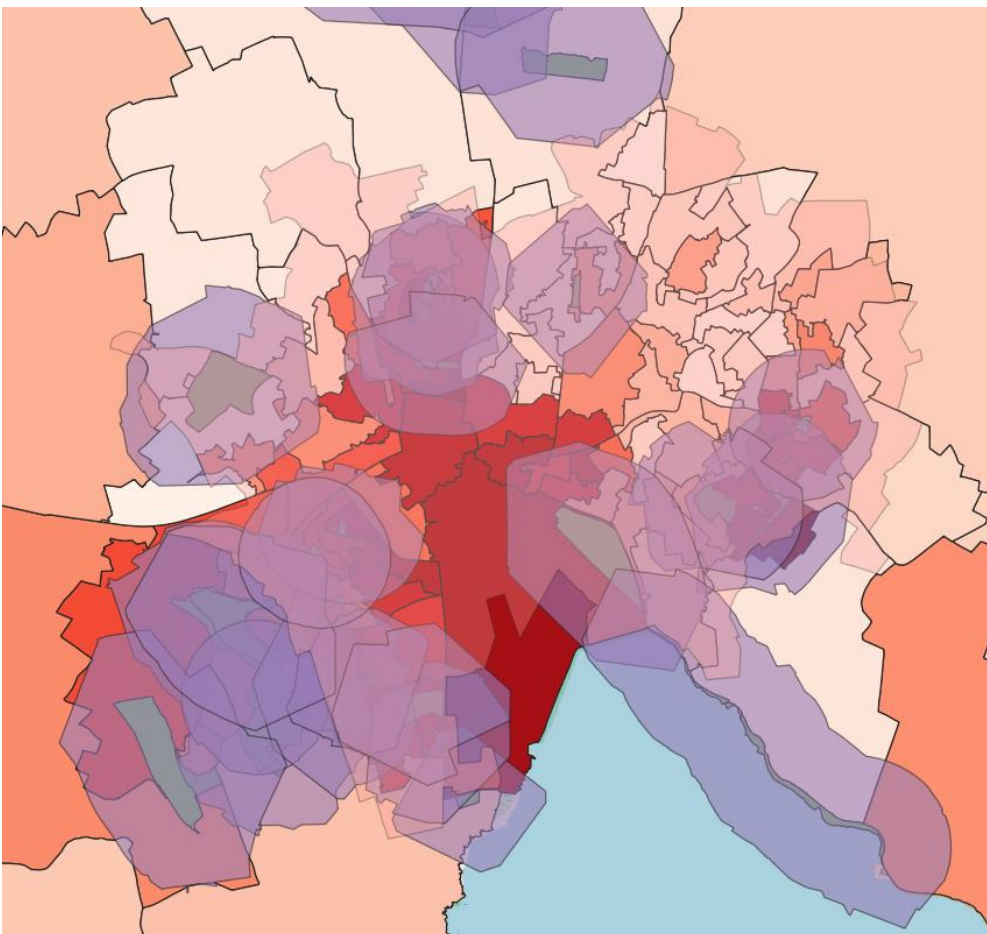
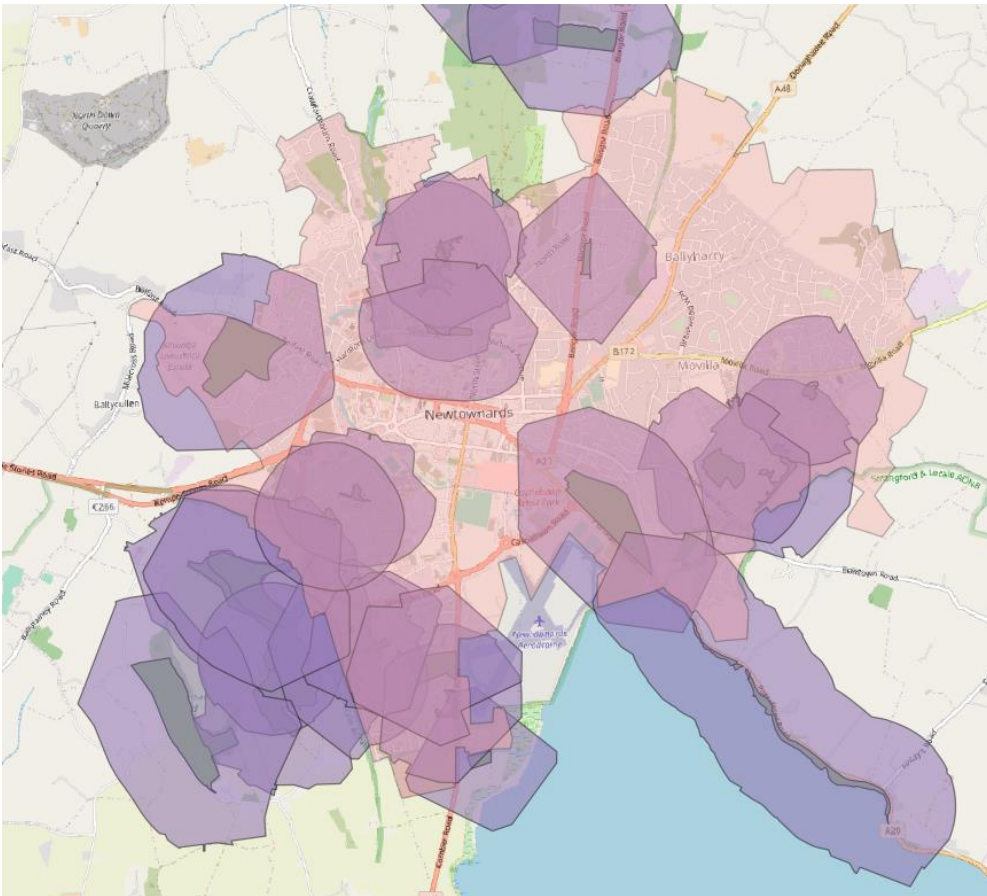
Ballymoney



Dungannon

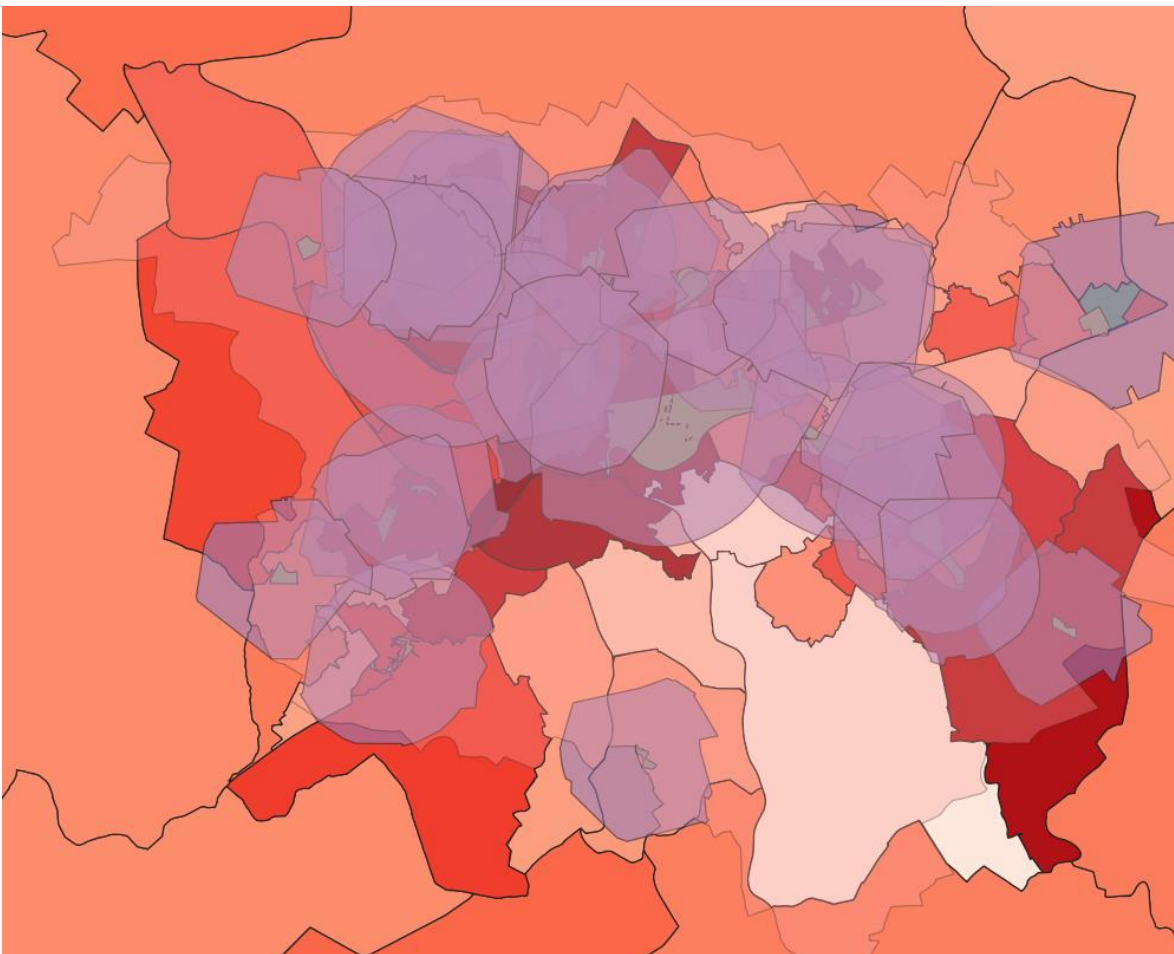
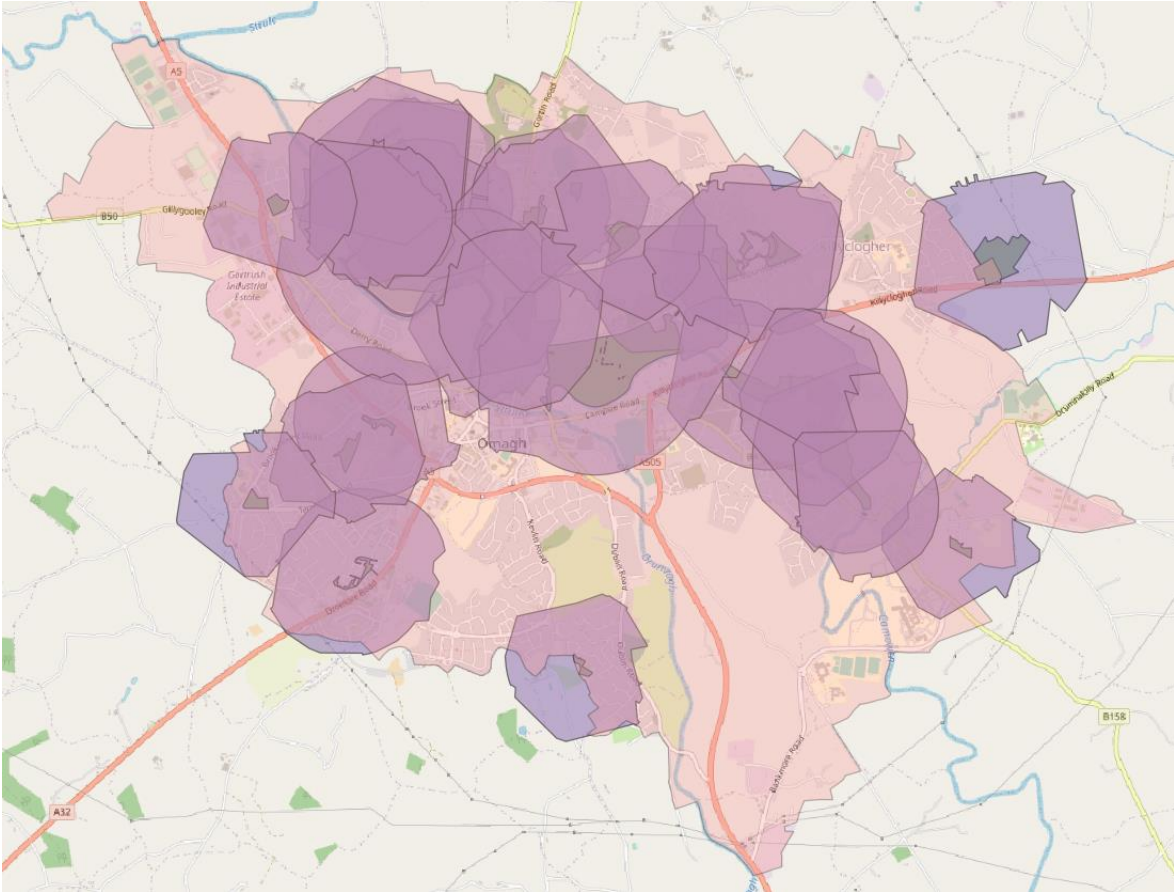


Newtownards

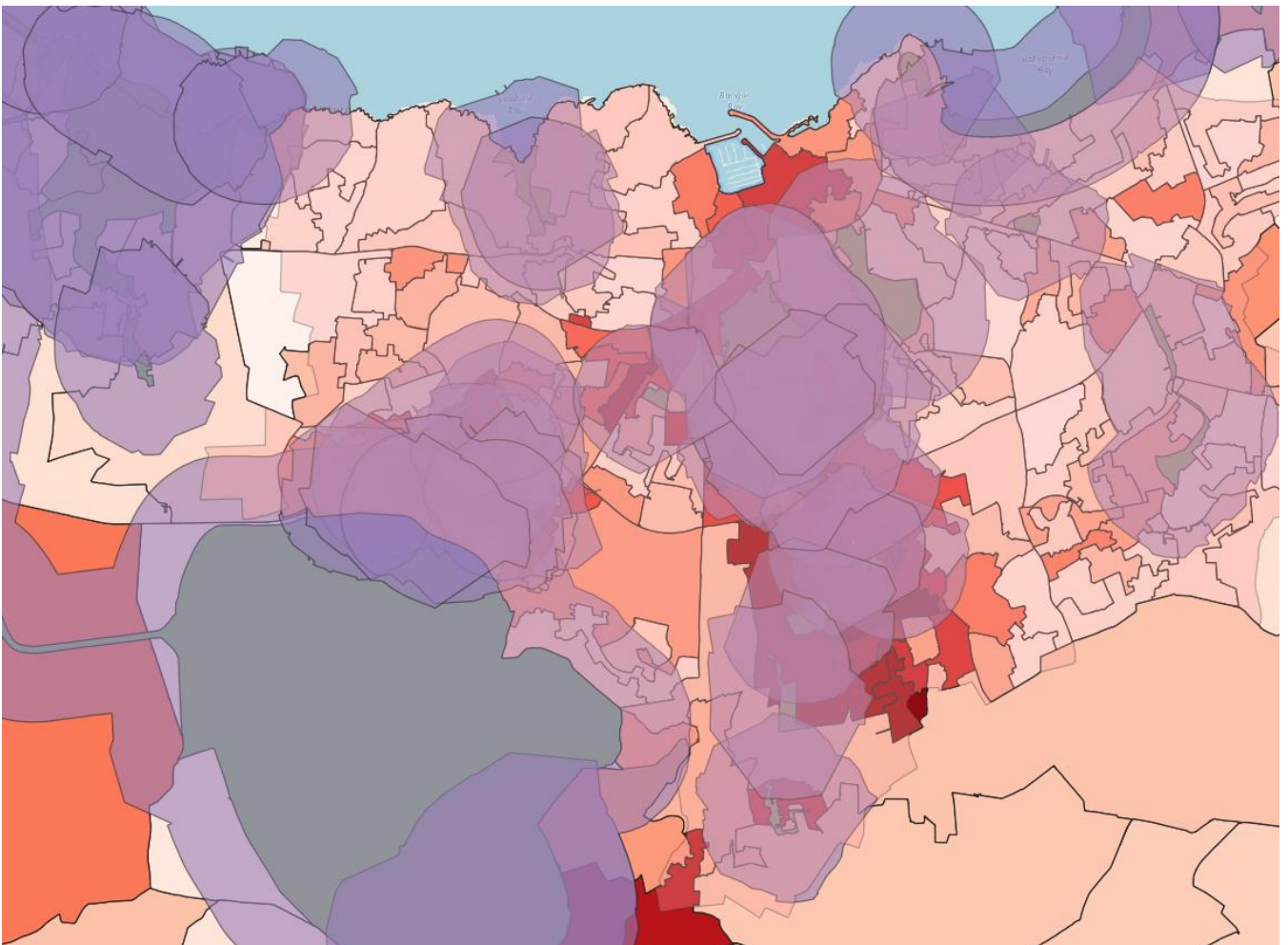
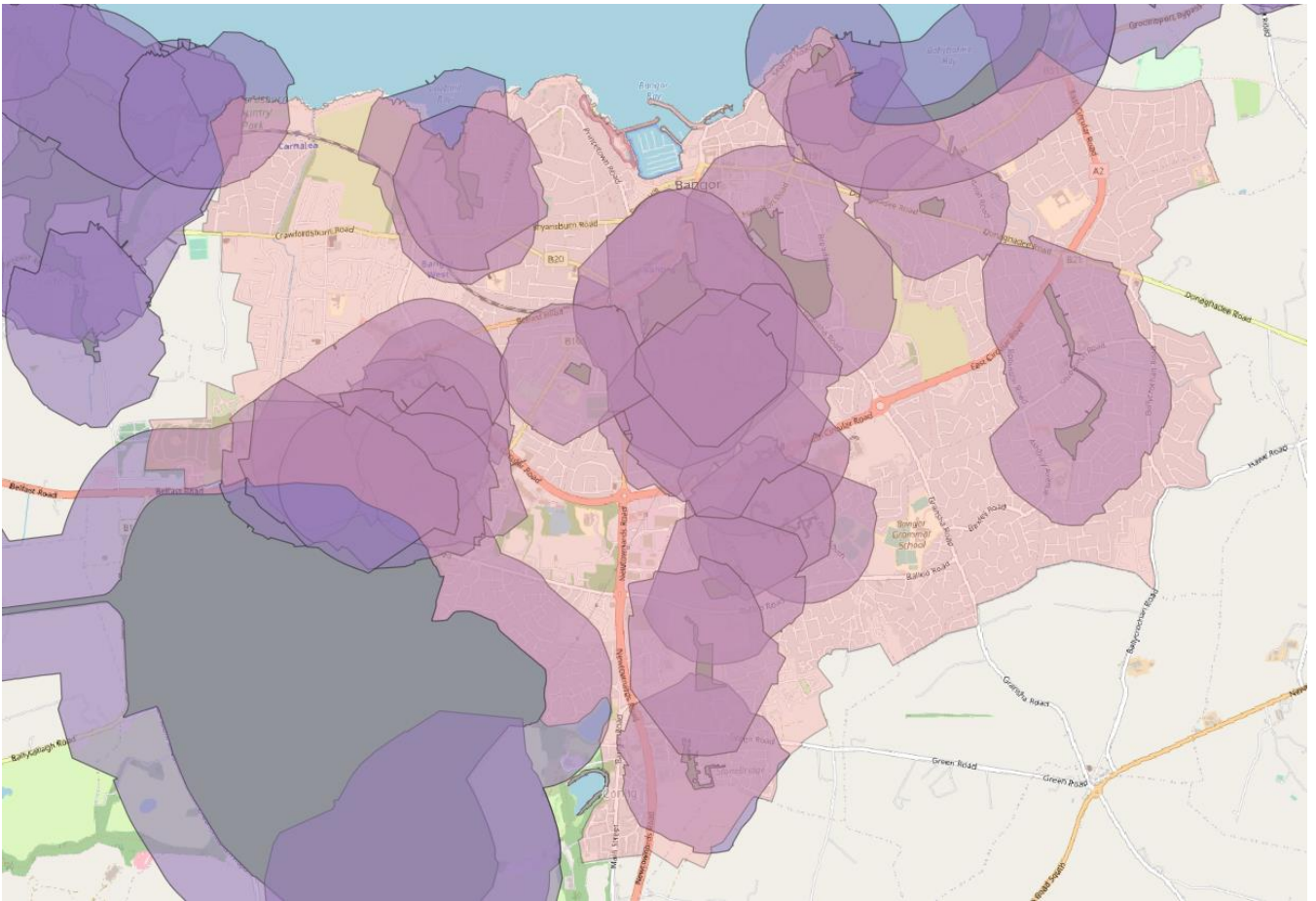


It should be noted that the area shown as most deprived is the Newtownards airport, so has no residents living there. To the north of this area there is a bowling green and a rugby grounds (as well as large plots of derelict green spaces), which although not publicly accessible do provide urban green space.

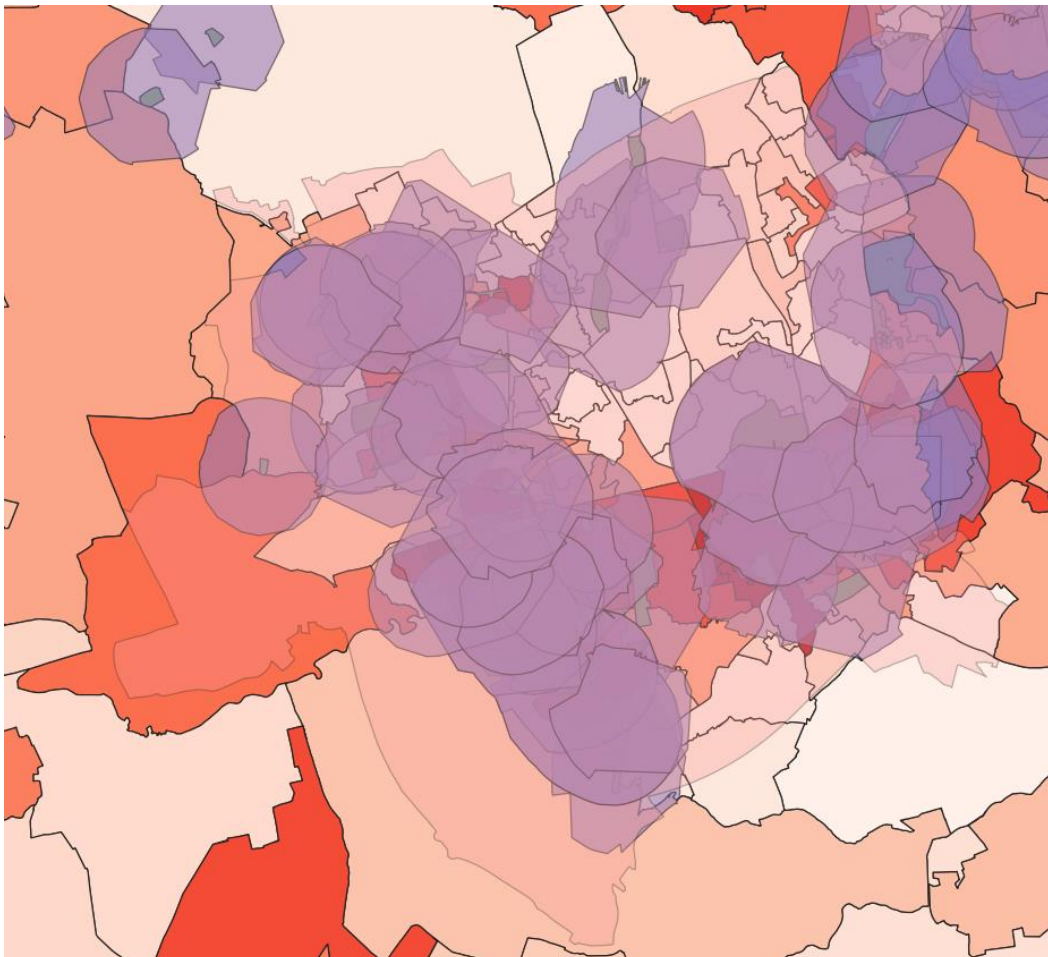
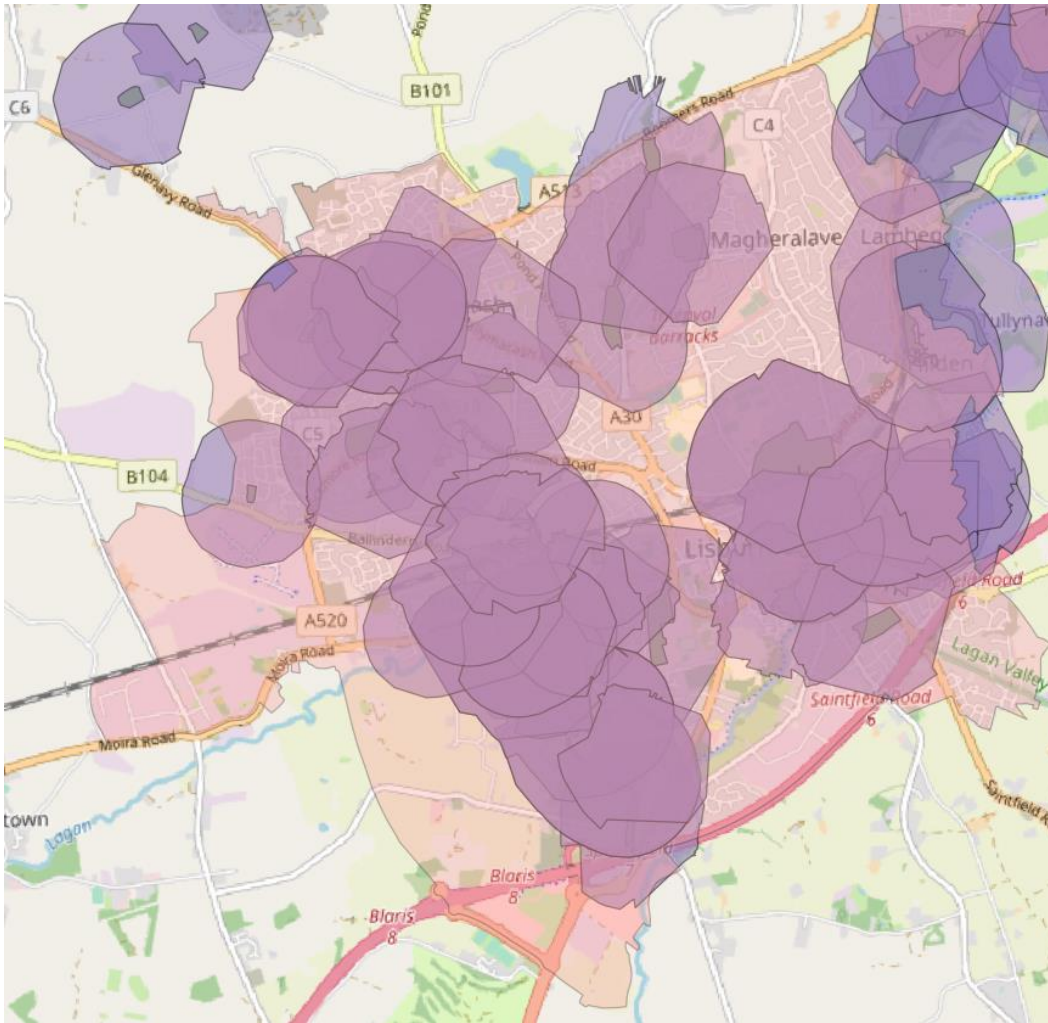
Omagh



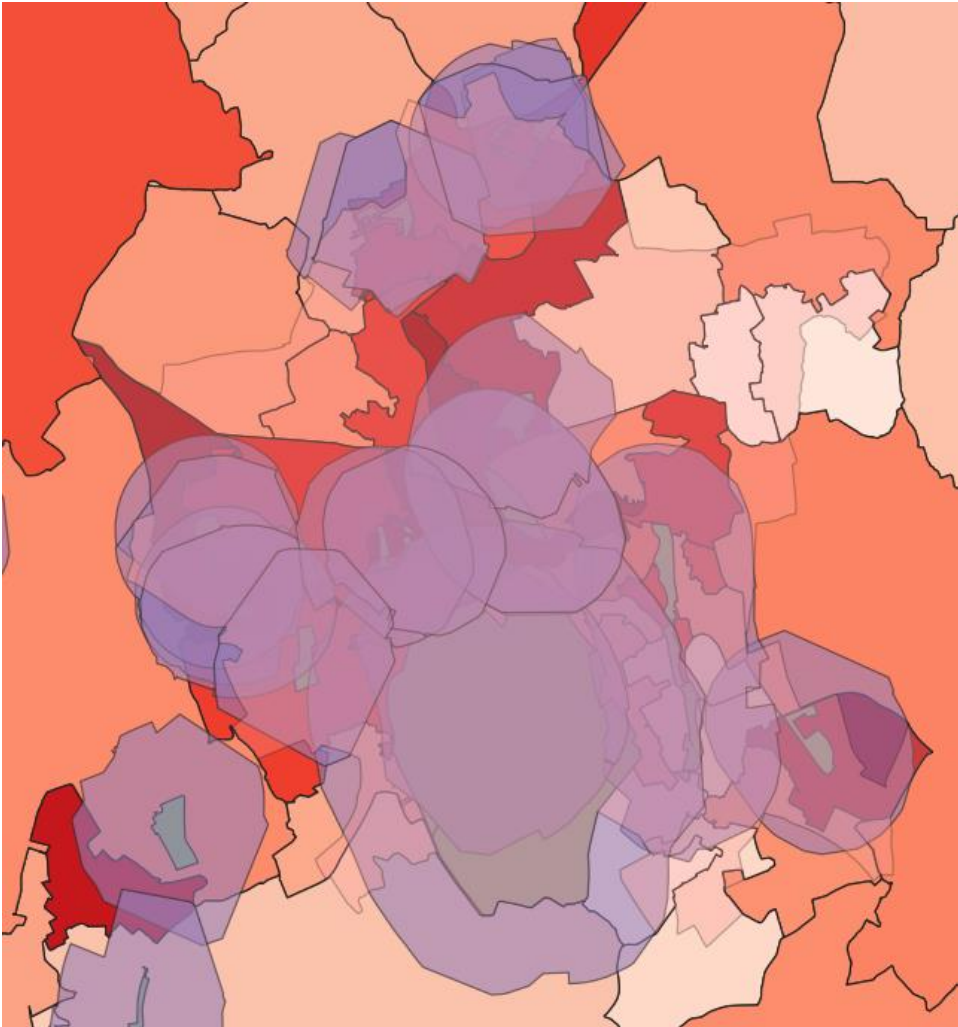
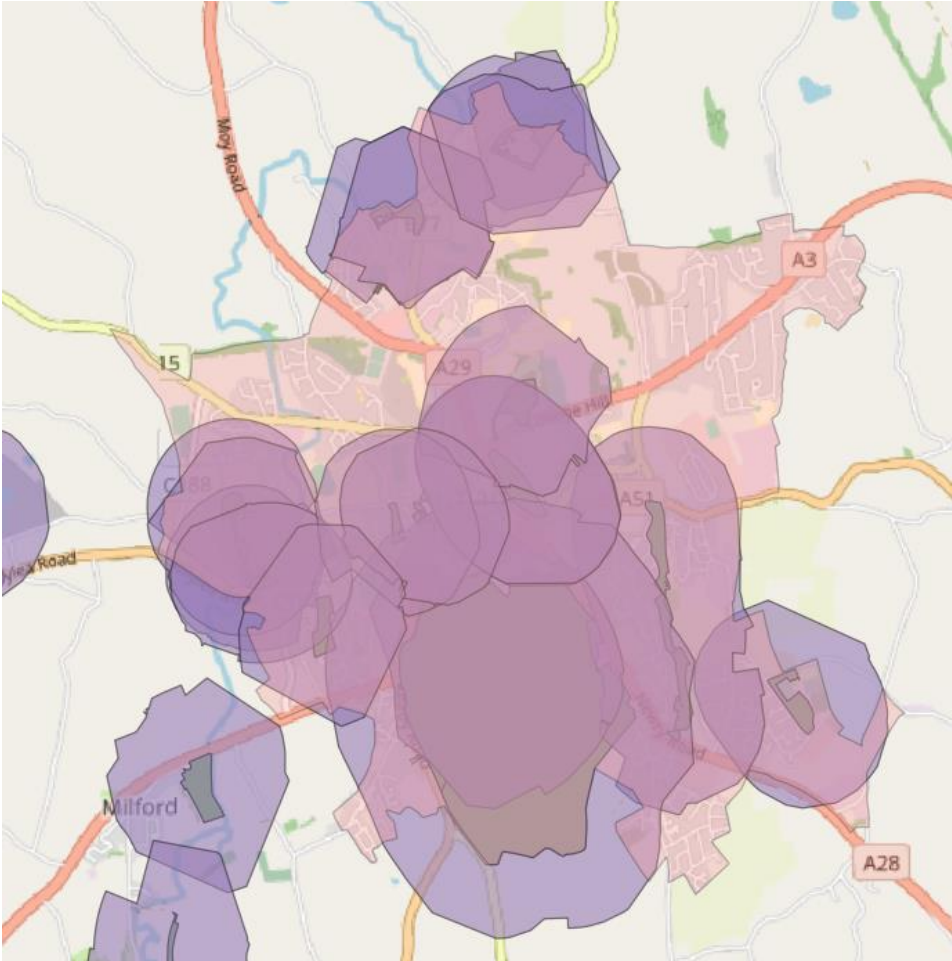
Bangor



Lisburn



Armagh



Conclusions

These GIS images provide a snapshot of the current provision of urban green space for local residents within a 400m radius of their home. It highlights the general lack of green space provision in our smaller cities and towns.

Belfast had low levels of green space provision within the city centre; this lack of publicly accessible green space often overlapped with some of the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland.

To make matters worse Belfast City is an economic hub for Northern Ireland with 30% of employment for the province based in the City, resulting in it being the third most congested city in the UK. D. Carpenter 2019, states that Belfast is one of the most polluted cities in the UK, with the main arterial routes into Belfast passing through or alongside inner-city neighbourhoods. Thus the effect of air pollution from vehicles commuting from outside of the city, from often more affluent areas, with higher (and multiple) car ownership, is felt hardest by those who don't own cars, live in areas of high deprivation that have the worst public health and the least social mobility.

The lack of green space and associated trees and other vegetation that could help reduce air pollution levels in these deprived city centre areas means that local residents are more likely to suffer from pollution related health issues. A study by the Woodland Trust states that up to 36,000 UK deaths per year can be attributed to human-made air pollution with an estimated annual cost of £20bn.

The health benefits of urban green spaces, along with the wider economic benefits to an area such as increased house prices and increased commercial trading in areas near green space; suggest that focusing on green space provision should be a priority for local councils and communities alike, particularly in deprived areas with a lack of private green space provision.

David Carpenter 2019 <https://www.northernslant.com/belfast-is-the-most-car-dependent-city-in-the-uk/>

Woodland Trust <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/tackling-air-pollution-with-trees/>