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CARDIFF CITY CENTRE IS ONE OF THE LEAST GREEN IN GREAT BRITAIN

Cardiff has one of the least green city centres in Great Britain, according to a recent study from the University of Sheffield. Of 68 towns and cities with more than 100,000 people, Cardiff was ranked 61st out of the 68. Swansea was ranked 27th. Newport was not included.

The study analysed the green attributes of city centres and the immediate surrounding area to measure tree cover, vegetation, and the presence of parks, to compile a comprehensive ranking of city centres in England, Scotland and Wales.

The team found Exeter's urban centre is the greenest, followed by Islington, Bristol, Bournemouth and Cambridge. Meanwhile, Glasgow was ranked the least green city centre according to the study's criteria, with Middlesbrough, Sheffield, Liverpool, and Leeds, making up the bottom five.

"The result might be a surprise to many" said Nerys Lloyd Price, Chair of Cardiff Civic Society, "given the presence of Bute Park but what it shows is the almost complete absence of any green space or trees in the city centre itself or in the recent redevelopment of the Bay.

"Trees, vegetation cover, and public greenspaces, including parks and sports fields, have been shown to

have positive impacts on biodiversity and human health, she continued.”

This depressing result stands alongside the measure of amount of green space in Cardiff as a whole, generally accepted as 8% compared to cities like Birmingham and Manchester where the figure is more like 15%.

“This is why we have to preserve what green space we have left in Cardiff as part of the Replacement Local Development Plan process” said Peter Fortune of the Radyr and Morganstown Local Development Group.

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PRESS RELEASE FROM SHEFFIELD UNIVERSITY

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Greenest city centres in Great Britain revealed

A new study has revealed the greenest city centres in Great Britain.

- Researchers analysed 68 city centres across England, Scotland and Wales ranking them on tree cover, vegetation and parks in the heart of the city centres
- The top five greenest city centres are all in the South of England (Exeter, Islington, Bristol, Bournemouth Cambridge)
- This is the first study of its kind to focus specifically on the heart of city centres, as opposed to prior studies which have measured greenness of whole cities, including broader suburban areas
- Laying on the edge of the Peak District, Sheffield is renowned as the UK’s greenest city overall with more trees per person than any city in Europe - however its city centre is more built-up due to its industrial heritage

A new study has revealed the greenest city centres in Great Britain.

Researchers from the University of Sheffield analysed the green attributes of urban city centres such as tree cover, vegetation, and the presence of parks, to compile a comprehensive ranking of city centres in England, Scotland and Wales.

The team found Exeter's urban centre is the greenest, followed by Islington, Bristol, Bournemouth and Cambridge. Meanwhile, Glasgow was ranked the least green city centre according to the study's criteria, with Middlesbrough, Sheffield, Liverpool, and Leeds, making up the bottom five.

The findings, published in PLOS ONE, reveal a clear divide between the city centres with the most green attributes all located in the South of England, whilst the lowest scoring cities are ex-industrial areas in the North of Great Britain.

While numerous prior studies have measured greenness of whole cities, including broader suburban areas, this is the first to focus specifically on the heart of city centres, where people tend to spend much of their time on activities such as work, recreation, and shopping.

Trees, vegetation cover, and public green spaces, including parks and sports fields, have been shown to have positive impacts on biodiversity and human health.

Dr Paul Brindley, Senior Author of the study from the University of Sheffield's Department of Landscape Architecture, said:“ By 2050 nearly 70 per cent of the world's population are projected to be living in towns and cities. Green spaces have been proven time and again to boost people's wellbeing and are essential to biodiversity, but nobody has ever looked at how green our city centres are, despite the amount of time individuals spend in them on a daily basis.

“The fact that all five of the greenest city centres are in the South of England, whilst the five city centres with the least green attributes are in the North of Great Britain, clearly highlights the need to urgently improve the greenness of city centres at the bottom of the list, and to ensure that action is taken by local authorities to close the gap.”

Despite Sheffield's lower ranking for city centre greenness, it is renowned as the greenest city in the country overall, with more trees per

person than any other city in Europe. There are 250 public parks and 52 square miles of national park. Work is already ongoing in Sheffield city centre to increase green space, including the construction of the new Pounds Park, **Grey to Green schemes** along major travel corridors and the **planned development of a new public park** on the site of the city's castle.

Dr Brindley added:“ Sheffield is a spectacular city for green space with the Peak District on its doorstep and more trees per person than any other city in Europe, however its city centre doesn't rank highly in terms of greenness compared to other urban centres. This was one of our most surprising findings, and is perhaps due to the city's industrial heritage and how the city developed.

“This highlights why the study is so important and the vital need to identify green space inequalities even in the least obvious places and promote measures to address them.

“For example, work is already being done in Sheffield's city centre to bring it inline with the leafy suburbs and vast parks just a short walk away from the heart of the city which make it the greenest overall in the UK.”

In total 68 municipalities in Great Britain with populations of at least 100,000 were ranked for the study. They were analysed via three metrics of greenness: tree cover, presence of greenspaces, and the normalised difference vegetation index (NDVI), which uses satellite observations of light absorption and reflection to measure vegetation cover in a given area.

Following their findings, researchers also uncovered a statistical link between a lower greenness score and higher levels of deprivation. It's hoped that the results will help inform efforts by local authorities to boost the greenness of urban centres and reduce the disparity between those in the North and the South.