



Lowestoft Open Space Needs Assessment

(Created with reference to the Waveney Open Space Needs Assessment 2015)

January 2018

Background

Open space offers significant benefits to local communities. Open space can positively contribute towards sustaining and improving the local environment and have an important role in enhancing quality of life and attracting people to live and work in the area. Green space and recreational opportunities contribute significantly to the perception of attractiveness of a locality.

This report comprises of several assessments and discussions to provide an overview of green space in the town and how provision meets the needs of people in Lowestoft. The assessment includes an audit of parks and gardens, amenity green spaces, play spaces and allotments located within Lowestoft and is compiled using a document produced by Waveney District Council. Because of this some of the stats are Lowestoft wide and not just related to the area covered by Lowestoft Town Council.

Areas of biodiversity value have been identified and information relating to areas important to the biodiversity network has been collated and discussed. An overview of natural and semi-natural green space and cemeteries is provided and discussed in the context of the green infrastructure network and their contribution towards biodiversity. Green corridors that can support the movement of people and wildlife in the built-up areas of the town and habitats which provide key linkages in the green infrastructure network for people and wildlife are discussed. There was a previous Waveney Open Space Needs Assessment which was completed in 2006. The 2006 report involved public consultation and using the findings identified standards that should be applied locally. In the parks and gardens, amenity and play space sections of this report key findings coming out of the 2006 consultation are set out to provide some background. These have been used as a baseline to compare current provision.

How to use this document

This document sets out information about existing open space provision. Open space typologies discussed in the Open Space Needs Assessment include:

- biodiversity distribution
- natural and semi-natural green space
- parks and gardens
- amenity green space
- equipped play space
- allotments
- cemeteries and churchyards
- green corridors.

The first part of the document provides an overview of the findings, there are some comparisons with levels across Waveney but generally are split to North and South Lowestoft. Due to the sub sections used by Waveney statistics can include Carlton Colville, Corton, Oulton Broad and Oulton.

The different sections set out the key findings for each sub area. This includes quantity of provision, site quality, value the site offers to the community and how accessible the sites are. The assessment is not intended to identify specific issues that should be addressed on particular sites but is more strategic in its approach.

Identifying the location of open spaces, their catchment areas, site quality and the value the open space offers the community provides a baseline where open spaces in the town can be compared to each other. In this way, if open spaces require attention in different areas of the town, issues and improvements can be considered and prioritised in a wider context of the open space network and relative benefit to an area.

At the end of each section a number of recommendations based on the findings of the report are set out for further consideration. These recommendations are provided as guidance and are not intended to be interpreted as 'fixed'.

Indeed, they are Waveney's recommendations which Lowestoft Town Council may consider differently. These recommendations are distilled into the LTC Open Spaces Strategy which will be an 'active' list to be updated as future issues and needs are identified.

Open space provision in the Lowestoft and Waveney

This section of the report provides an overview of open space provision across the District. The following sections discuss the findings in greater detail. In Waveney there is approximately 370 hectares of open space of which 161 hectares is considered to be freely accessible for the public to use. Different types of open space provision in the District are shown in Table 1.1. A majority of this is provided in Lowestoft where the largest population resides however this is only in total area not always in the amount of space per person. Indeed, South Lowestoft often has less provision per person than the District average.

Open space provision in Waveney (excludes semi-natural areas) Area (Ha)									
Sub area	Total area of open space	Parks and gardens	Amenity green space	Passive amenity green space	Equipped play space	Green corridors	Playing pitches	Allotments	Cemeteries and churchyards
Beccles	49.6	7.3	4.2	2.4	3.6	1.8	17.0	6.5	6.9
Bungay	9.8	0	3.3	1.1	1.2	0	0.3	0.5	3.4
Halesworth	14.6	1.3	1.6	1.4	1.4	0	4.2	1.7	3.1
Kessingland	10.0	0	2.3	2.7	0.6	0	1.5	1.6	1.3
North Lowestoft	130.4	16.8	39.6	6.4	2.8	11.8	31.3	9.2	12.5
South Lowestoft	70.2	22.8	18.4	3.9	2.3	5.5	7.0	4.5	5.9
Southwold & Reydon	25.2	0	4.9	2.3	1.3	0	9.5	4.3	3.0
Rural	60.0	0	8.8	1.0	1.8	0	21.7	6.5	20.8
District	370.4	48.1	83.2	21.2	14.9	19.1	92.5	34.8	56.9

Note: Rounding may lead to inconsistencies of sums and values may differ from tables elsewhere in the document.

Within Lowestoft the Open Space provision per 1000 people is above the norm across the District (3.2ha per 1000) in North Lowestoft (3.6ha per 1000) but beneath the norm in South Lowestoft (2.0ha per 1000).

The amount of open space includes open space that has restricted access (e.g. school playing fields) and open space whose primary function is to provide openness in the townscape (excluding road verges). Access to semi-natural open space is important for communities, however, these have not been included in the total open space figures as they are not actively managed in the same way as other forms of accessible open space (e.g. amenity green space).

The amount of open space in Lowestoft that is available for community use and provides a role that encourages people to use the space in again above and below the district norm. In North Lowestoft it is 1.7ha and in South Lowestoft 1.3ha against a District average of 1.4ha).

This figure excludes playing pitches with restricted access (e.g. school and club sports pitches) and open space that is designed to provide openness but has no ancillary facilities to encourage use of the space (e.g. passive amenity green space).

Provision of open space with different functions in the community

South Lowestoft and Bungay have the highest proportion of open space to support formal and informal recreational activities (compared to open space primarily provided for visual and ornamental purposes). Again, this is due to overall space rather than space per person. They also have the highest percentage of their open space provided in the form of parks and gardens. Being multi-functional and generally of high quality and value these open spaces are of significant benefit to the community and provide a destination / focal point in a locality although significantly the only space in Waveney's South Lowestoft sub area to be recognised as a destination park is Nicholas Everitt's Park which does not fall within the Town Council's remit, however this is not to say that the town council cannot designate Kensington Gardens or Fen Park as potential Destination Parks and work towards this goal.

Amenity spaces in the town tend to be limited in the activities they can support and coupled with the relatively low amount of quantitative open space available in these areas overall provision needs improvement. Indeed, both areas of Lowestoft have the lowest amount of equipped play space in the District.

Quality of accessible open space provision.

The quality of open space has been assessed using criteria such as site condition and cleanliness, appropriate fencing, condition of paths and surfaces, extent of misuse and vandalism, amount of use, disabled access, aesthetic attributes and the provision of supplementary facilities such as seating, bins and trees. Halesworth and Southwold & Reydon have the best quality of provision. North and South Lowestoft have the most number of sites with high quality, however, they also have the highest proportion of open space that is of low quality. In North Lowestoft over 50% of Open Space is low quality compared to 22% which is high, South Lowestoft fares a little better with 42% low quality and 28% high quality.

Value of accessible open space

The value of open space is intrinsically linked to the quality of provision. Criteria assessed included value of equipment and ancillary facilities, age of facilities, safety, proximity to residential areas, integration with the surrounding area, cultural and educational value and accessibility and landscaping.

The value open spaces provide for their communities is relatively consistent across the District (Figure 1.8). This indicates that all communities have access to medium and high value open spaces. However, this does not show how easy or difficult access to open space actually is. Across all the District there is less high value open space than low value, with the exception of Southwold, Reydon and the rural areas.

Access to parks and gardens, amenity green space and play space

People in North and South Lowestoft have the best access to parks and gardens, amenity green space and equipped play space. Again, this is across the greater Lowestoft area and actually, in North Lowestoft, households within catchment areas for Play Space are actually the lowest percentage in the District.

Deprivation

Indices of Deprivation 2010 ranked Waveney at 112 out of 354 local authorities in England, where 1 was the most deprived area and 354 the least deprived. Within the District there are variations in the levels of deprivation. WDC believes that provision of open space in Waveney does not correlate with the level of deprivation in an area however it should be noted that the six wards that make up the Town Council are six of the seven most deprived wards in the District and more often than not the provision per head in Lowestoft is lower than the District average. This is especially true as the District counts in the beach as part of that open space. The largest amount of open space also tends to be on the outskirts of the town meaning that large areas have a more than 15-minutes walk to access usable open space.

Local green space designations

The National Planning Policy Framework (2013) states that 'Local Green Spaces' can be designated for special protection if it is demonstrated they are of special interest to a community. They can be identified through Local Plans or Neighbourhood Plans. They can also be listed as an 'Asset of Community Value'. As of January 2015, there are no Local Green Space Designations in Waveney.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity refers to all of the natural world and all living organisms within it, including plants, animals, bacteria and micro-organisms. The convention on biodiversity defines it as:

“The variability among living organisms from all sources including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems, and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems” (Source: Natural England website).

Introduction to the biodiversity distribution assessment

Both Lowestoft Town and Waveney District have a wide range of wildlife and habitats, including coastline, parkland, arable fields, rivers, hedges and woodlands. Many of these are extremely valuable in their own right and require protection and enhancement.

These sites often also form part of a wider network of sites and wildlife corridors that increase the range of habitats that can support local wildlife. Networks of biologically valuable sites often have greater value than each of the sites individually. For this reason, Waveney District Council wants to map ecological sites and networks to better understand how they can function alongside other types of green infrastructure. This is an area that Lowestoft Town Council can probably work in partnership with Waveney District Council.

The Waveney District Council Biodiversity Audit was completed in 2007 by Suffolk Wildlife Trust. This biodiversity audit included officially designated sites, county wildlife sites and other sites that were considered to have ecological value. Suffolk Wildlife Trust visited each site to record the plants and wildlife present, together with any habitats. In particular, Suffolk Wildlife Trust identified protected species on each site, together with the general condition of the site and any improvements that were considered necessary. The results were used to inform the preparation of the emerging local development framework, as well as planning application decisions. The information in this section is primarily drawn from these audits, a synopsis of the areas within the Town Council area can be found on the website.

Consultation between WDC & Suffolk Wildlife Trust has indicated that the existing biodiversity audits are still sufficiently up to date to inform plan making, although a new audit will be required on any site that is subject to a development proposal. Therefore, the emphasis of this Biodiversity Distribution Assessment is to investigate the spatial distribution of protected and unprotected areas that support animal and plant species across the District the wider area where green infrastructure overlaps adjacent Districts and Boroughs. The Biodiversity Distribution Assessment will not only support the plan making process, but it will also inform the preparation of a

wider Green Infrastructure Strategy. The Green Infrastructure Strategy will combine the spatial distribution of biodiversity with those of open space, playing pitches, allotments and green corridors to provide a more thorough understanding of how these sites relate to each other, local settlements and the wider environment. The Green Infrastructure Strategy will help to better plan for future development, identify shortfalls in provision and better understand how sites and spaces can contribute to a high-quality environment within the District.

Biodiversity in the Lowestoft area

Lowestoft has a significant number of biodiversity sites that support twelve Biodiversity Action Plan Species including great Crested Newt, Water Vole, Common Lizard, Adder, Linnet, Norfolk Hawker Dragonfly and Ant-lion. Several rare and unusual species have also been recorded in the area including Dartford Warbler, Cetti's Warbler, Water Rail and Purple Sandpipers. The breeding colony of Kittiwake located at the eastern end of Lake Lothing is one of two along the east coast of England. The Rustyback Fern is regionally rare and the northern edge of Lake Lothing is one of two sites in Suffolk to support the species.

Several small water bodies along the South Lowestoft Relief Road corridor are found near Long Road, Kirkley Fen Park and Carlton Meadow Park. These provide examples of how sustainable urban North Lowestoft South Lowestoft drainage networks (SuDS) can be included as part of a development to provide a function use (flood mitigation), amenity (openness and colour in the built-up area) and provide a variety of habitats to support wildlife. Flixton Decoy is located close to the Lound Lakes north of Lowestoft and is the largest freshwater body in the vicinity. These water bodies are surrounded by woodland with public access. The flooding of Leathes Ham in recent years has increased the value of the site for wildlife value. Gunton Pond CWS has a diversity of aquatic flora and its setting within Gunton Wood provides several different habitats in a small area. Great Crested Newts have been recorded in the Gunton area. In addition to wildlife value, ponds in residential areas such as Jenkins Green, Vermeer Close and Wissett Way provide value as amenity spaces with species such as ducks being commonly present encouraged by feeding.

Several areas of grassland such as Gunton Meadow in North Lowestoft retain species rich habitats. The Net Drying Area located on a stretch of coastal shingle is a BAP habitat and extends northward to include the North Denes. Similar acid grassland is found at Kirkley Ham and Pakefield Park in South Lowestoft.

Cemeteries and churchyards such as St Margaret's Churchyard, Kirkley Cemetery and the recently prepared Gunton Woodland burial site provide grassland and trees that support biodiversity and are likely to support wildlife movement between sites in the urban area.

The main body of heathland is located at Gunton Warren. Heathland habitats often have a unique assemblage of plants and animals. The site is characterised by

heather, a BAP habitat, and is associated with the presence of Adder, Ant-lion and Dartford Warbler.

Fragments of ancient woodland are found to the north of the town in Foxburrow Wood and Workhouse Wood while other woodlands such as Parkhill Wood and Corton Woods exhibit flora typical of ancient woodland. Other areas of semi-natural woodland located in the town include: Arnold's Bequest which links the Net Drying Area to Sparrow's Nest Park and Belle Vue Park; the Great Eastern Linear Park which provides an extended length of habitat that acts as a greenway in the heart of North Lowestoft.

In South Lowestoft the Relief Road corridor connects woodland, scrub and wetland habitats from Lake Lothing down to Silverwood Close. Open spaces such as these are likely to act as stepping stones between these habitats for species that move within the built-up area. These corridors not only provide quality movement corridors for wildlife but also enhance the built-up area, enabling the public to use these sites in a functional manner which can contribute positively towards the perception of an area.

Scrub and hedges are valuable habitats for birds, invertebrates and small mammals. Located in many different areas of the town they can provide feeding, breeding and roosting opportunities for a range of bird species. Scrub habitat is commonly found along the coast near the Gunton Cliffs and Pakefield Cliffs, urban parks including Pakefield Park, wildlife corridors and small open spaces that act as stepping stones between sites. They are often complementary to other forms of open space that provide wildlife habitat. Over time where open spaces are not maintained the scrubbing over of grassland can take place providing new habitats for some species while reducing the quality of habitat for others. For example, the Brooke Yachts and Jeld Wen Mosaic CWS located on the southern shore of Lake Lothing is previously developed land that was left unmanaged. Scrub has since covered much of the site over with pockets of open grass, rock, and man-made debris. The variety of habitats on site has created an area where a number of protected species are now present including the Common Lizard. If left unmanaged further scrub growth is likely to result in the Common Lizard habitat being compromised. Therefore, management of sites, where appropriate, may be needed to ensure particular habitats are protected to maintain their wildlife value.

Hedges are a common feature of the urban environment and are a prominent feature in the open countryside contributing towards landscape character. They provide habitat and visual enhancement in private and public gardens and provide shelter for small animals and invertebrates to move discretely between other habitats such as trees and scrub. Extending from the urban boundary hedges provide wildlife connections between the urban area and the countryside.

The movement of species between similar habitats can be important to facilitate dispersal or migration so that isolated pockets of small, in-bred populations do not develop. For free movement to occur the links between separate habitats should ideally be of the same habitat type (e.g. woodland species prefer a wildlife corridor comprising woodland, scrub or hedge).

Biodiversity in the Lowestoft area

Along Lake Lothing wildlife corridors extend both north and south through the urban area enabling wildlife to move between open spaces and habitats. In North Lowestoft Leathes Ham is part of a wider network of open spaces that includes Normanston Park, Lowestoft Cemetery and semi-natural woodland opposite Princes Walk. To the northeast the corridor extends along the Great Eastern Linear Park towards Yarmouth Road and the habitats along the coast. To the north Peto Way and Millennium Way create a green corridor consisting of grassed areas, scrub, hedges and trees that enhances connectivity to larger green spaces in the north of the town such as Foxburrow Wood and eastward to the coast. To the west this greenway links to the edge of Lowestoft and into the open countryside through connecting hedgerows and trees and into the Waveney Valley. This corridor remains relatively young in terms of its establishment but in the long-term as vegetation becomes more established the corridor will become more important for wildlife and the public realm.

The route is also supported by a number of open spaces adjoining the corridor. Further west along the north shore of Oulton Broad, Hall Road Ham and Bonds Meadow provide a quality wildlife corridor to the north. Providing connections that will support and enhance this ecological corridor should be encouraged. Around the periphery of North Lowestoft hedgerows provide an opportunity for some species to move between the urban fringe, the open countryside and further afield towards the Waveney Valley. Away from the main green corridors mentioned previously there are few contiguous green areas within the built-up area. A similar pattern is evident in South Lowestoft.

South of Lake Lothing Kirkley Ham connects into an extended network of open spaces that includes Kirkley Fen and Kirkley Fen Park, the South Lowestoft bypass, Pakefield Park, Kirkley Cemetery and Rosedale Park. Small open spaces and vegetation in private gardens beyond this network will encourage connectivity south through Carlton Colville into the open countryside. The A12 corridor from the Stradbroke Road roundabout is likely to have limited value for wildlife because of its close proximity to traffic and the lack of dense planting, however, the hedging and trees acting as a barrier between the road and residential properties are likely to provide some opportunities for wildlife movement in this area between the roundabout and the coast.

Compared to North Lowestoft there are fewer hedgerows connecting the urban fringe to the open countryside. This is particularly evident south of Carlton Colville where fewer quality networks of trees and hedgerows link to open spaces near the edge of the settlement. This level of connectivity is likely to be further eroded as proposed development at Carlton Hall comes forward. Most tree and hedgerow connections between the residential areas of south Lowestoft and the countryside lie to the west near the Waveney Valley and to the south along the coast where the coastal environment (Pakefield Cliffs to Easton Bavents SSSI) is connected to inland areas closer to the A12. The hedgerows and trees provide biodiversity connections

as part of the coastal area and help connect and define the character of the Strategic Gap between Kessingland and South Lowestoft.

Biodiversity offsetting

Biodiversity offsetting is an activity that compensates for the impact of development upon any site of biodiversity value. The creation of another site of biodiversity value in a different location or a project to enhance the biodiversity value of another site can improve biodiversity and green infrastructure in an area where it could have the most benefit or alternatively it may take place on the site that is subject to development. Biodiversity offsetting has the potential to be an important way of ensuring that development does not reduce the quality and quantity of green infrastructure with that has biodiversity value.

Biodiversity offsetting can be provided in different forms but its main objectives are:

- Biodiversity offsetting should be measurable. The value of the biodiversity offsetting project should be quantified and measured against the value of biodiversity that is lost to or impacted by development. Offsetting should be measured against the impact of development even if the project takes place in another location and is different in nature to the biodiversity that has been lost.
- Biodiversity offsetting projects should not merely replace biodiversity lost to development but should create an improvement to biodiversity in an area. In other words, the value created by the biodiversity offsetting project should be greater than the value of the biodiversity that has been damaged or replaced by development.
- Offsetting should only be considered if there are no alternative sites for developments that do not contain any biodiversity and biodiversity cannot be designed into the proposed development.

Within Lowestoft the preference should always be towards protecting sites of biodiversity value from development. In practice this means directing development to where it will not impact upon biodiversity or, if this is not possible, by designing development in such a way as to minimise the impact on biodiversity. However, there may be instances in the future where impact upon biodiversity is unavoidable and biodiversity offsetting should be considered. It is important to consider that creating sites of biodiversity quality takes time and implementing biodiversity offsetting may be inappropriate as a result.

For example, the loss of ancient woodland cannot be recreated during the lifespan of a development or a quality habitat will require preparation, management and funding that is far in excess the funds a development is likely to generate.

Biodiversity offsetting should only be considered when no other options to protect an existing site are available and the funding and management requirements placed on the developer should reflect the value of the site that is potentially lost.

Biodiversity in new developments

New development can provide opportunities to positively contribute towards biodiversity by considering the issue as part of the design process. The inclusion of biodiversity can be considered at a strategic level through the layout of a site and the masterplan and or at the scale of an individual building. The maintenance of open space can also affect the quality of biodiversity in an area. Some measures that can be considered (but not limited to) include the following:

- creation and restoration of ponds;
- creation of wildlife rich habitat as part of a landscaping scheme such as small mounds and depressions, planting of trees and shrubs and in exposed areas creating species rich grassland;
- retention and appropriate management of areas with botanical interest such as grass verge, south facing slopes, hedgerows and hedge banks;
- provision of hedges in place of fences;
- providing hedgehog access points within all internal and perimeter access fences (should be a minimum of 15sqcm);
- use native hedging species of local provenance;
- allowing the natural colonisation of new verges and community open spaces to benefit local flora and invertebrates;
- using a 'flowering lawn' seed mix for residential and public grassed areas to provide a nectar resource wherever practical;
- inclusion of green/brown roofs and green walls as part of the design of new buildings;
- incorporation of bird boxes for Swift, House Sparrow and Starling into new buildings;
- incorporation of bat boxes in new buildings.

Biodiversity Corridors

Lowestoft Coast

In the centre of Lowestoft is Lake Lothing which extends from the North Sea to the Broads and Waveney Valley. This provides a water based wildlife corridor connecting inland habitats to the coast. Along its length wetland habitat is found at Leathes Ham providing a link to wildlife corridors that extend northwards through the urban area.

In North Lowestoft vegetated shingle at Gunton Warren supports nationally scarce sea pea, a species that is susceptible to trampling by walkers and visitors. The Maritime Cliffs and Slopes, Vegetated Shingle and Coastal Sand Dunes of Gunton Warren are recognised as having high ecological importance and these habitats are complemented by adjacent heathland and woodlands. This mosaic of habitats supports a wide range of invertebrate species and migrant species. Reptiles including adder and common lizard are present on the site.

Gunton Warren and Corton Woods are complemented by other sites located to the south including the North Denes and the Net Drying Area. Undesignated open spaces such as these which lie in close proximity to the coast have the potential to act as stepping stones to support wildlife movement through the urban area to other habitats inland.

Artificial structures along the coast such as the harbour walls and Ness Point are of high value for colonies of sea birds. Purple sandpiper and the breeding colony of kittiwake are of particular note. South of Lake Lothing wildlife corridors extend from Kirkley Ham while at the western end of Lake Lothing Oulton Broad has connections to habitats of European Significance such as Sprats Water and Marshes SPA and SAC, the Broads SAC and the Broadland SPA.

On the shores of Lake Lothing opposite Leathes Ham is the Brooke Yachts and Jeld Wen Mosaic CWS. The site has a natural gradient of habitats from mudflats (BAP habitat) through grassland to scrub which is an ecologically scarce resource. The site supports a bird community that includes summer migrants and breeding linnet. The site also contains a colony of common lizard.

The Pakefield Cliffs and Pakefield Beach are located south of Lowestoft and are both designated as CWSs. They contain BAP habitats including Maritime Cliffs and Slopes and Vegetated Shingle and support similar plant species as Gunton Warren to the north. The coastal area extends southwards into the Pakefield to Easton Bavents SSSI. This site is designated for its geological attributes; however, it is also nationally important for its vegetated shingle features, saline lagoons, flood plain fens, an assemblage of nationally rare and nationally scarce vascular plants, scarce breeding birds and wintering bitterns.

What is natural and semi-natural green space? Natural and semi-natural green spaces have been defined as “land, water and geological features which have been naturally colonised by plants and animals and which are accessible on foot to large numbers of residents.” They are areas of undeveloped land with limited or no maintenance which have been colonised by vegetation and wildlife and include woodland, railway embankments, river and canal banks, road verges and derelict land. The primary function of natural and semi-natural green space is to promote biodiversity and nature conservation but they are also important for environmental education and awareness. This section of the Open Space Needs Assessment provides an overview of natural and semi-natural green space. It follows on from the ‘Biodiversity Distribution’ section which has considered open space with biodiversity value.

Description of site designations

International, national and local site designations found in Lowestoft & Waveney

Designation	Description
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	Area designated because of its outstanding landscape quality. Development within these areas is tightly controlled.
Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)	These were introduced to aid the protection of the most endangered species and habitats. BAPs can be designated at both the national and local levels.
County Wildlife Sites (CWS)	These sites do not have statutory protection but are designated at the county level because of their biodiversity value, which is measured against specific criteria.
Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	Non-statutory site designated at the county or district level because of its value to wildlife.
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	Site designated by Natural England because of its high value for wildlife or geology. These sites receive statutory protection.
Protected species	Species protected together with its breeding grounds and habitats under European Union legislation.
Ramsar Site	Sites designated under international treaty, which receive statutory protection because of their birdlife.
Roadside Nature Reserves (RNR)	Sites identified at the County level because of their rich variety of plants or plants of local or national importance. These sites do not receive statutory protection, although they may carry other designations that are statutorily protected.
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	Area designated under the European Union Habitats Directive to give special protection to a range of plants, animals and habitats.
Special Protection Area (SPA)	Area identified as being of value for the feeding, breeding, migrating and wintering of threatened species of bird. These sites are classified under the European Wild Birds Directive and receive enhanced protection.
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Site designated because of its high wildlife value, which receives statutory protection. This includes both SACs and SPAs.

Significant Sites of Biodiversity in Lowestoft

North Lowestoft	
County Wildlife Site	
Foxburrow Wood	Protected habitats: Ponds and wet woodland. Habitat: Ancient & semi-natural woodland. Protected fauna: Song Thrush, House Sparrow, Dunnock, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker.
Great Eastern Linear Park	Habitats: Bramble scrub with mature trees and a small stream. Flora: Watercress, Gorse, Tansy, Hawthorn, Mugwort, Ground Ivy, Sycamore, Cow Parsley, Hop Trefoil.
Gunton Meadow	Habitats: Lowland hay meadow, species rich grassland.
Gunton Pond	Protected habitats: Pond. Flora: Water Plantain, Common Spotted Orchid, Common Fleabane, White Water Lily, Woody Nightshade, Water Violet, Common Water Starwort, Wood Avens, Water Mint, Common Fleabane, Yellow Flag.
Gunton Warren	Protected habitats: Coastal sand dunes, coastal, vegetated shingle, lowland heath, maritime cliffs and slopes. Flora: Sea Kale, Sea Sandwort, Sea Holly, Sea Pea. Protected fauna: Adder, Dartford warbler, Song Thrush, Linnet, Yellowhammer, Common Lizard, Ant-lion.
Leathes Ham	Protected habitat: Eutrophic standing waters. Flora: Sallow, Gypsywort, Yellow Flag, Common Duckweed, Water Mint, Hairy Willow Herb, Square Stemmed Willow Herb, Celery Leaved Buttercup, Intermediate Water Starwort, Figwort, Soft Rush, Jointed Rush, Brooklime, Coltsfoot, Brookweed, Elm, Hazel, Oak, Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Herb Robert, Honeysuckle, Broad Buckler Fern, Hedge Woundwort, Biting Stonecrop. Protected fauna: Norfolk Hawker Dragonfly.

Lowestoft Harbour	Kittiwake Colony Habitat: Artificial cliff on the harbour wall. Protected species: Kittiwake.
Ness Point	Habitat: Concrete wall with large concrete blocks. Flora: Sea Sandwort, Yellow-horned Poppy, Scurvy Grass. Protected fauna: Purple Sandpiper. Other fauna: Turnstones, Rock Pipits, Mediterranean Gulls, Little Gulls, Little Terns, Common Terns, Sandwich, Guillemot, Razorbill, Great Crested Grebe.
Rustyback Fern Site	Habitat: Small tidal mudflats. Flora: Rustyback Fern, Imperforate St. John's Wort, Blue Fleabane, Birds-foot Trefoil, Musk Thistle, Ribbed Melilot, Wild Carrot, Black Knapweed, Grass-leaved Orache, Sea Purslane, Annual Sea Blite, Sea Aster, Sea Plantain, Greater Sea Spurrey . Protected Fauna: Herring Gull.
St Margaret's Churchyard	Habitats: Species rich grassland, boundary hedges. Flora: Yew, Wych Elm, Holly, Holm Oak, Dog Violets, Bluebells, Corn Salad, Ox-eye Daisies.
Local Nature Reserve	
Leathes Ham	Protected habitat: Eutrophic standing waters. Flora: Sallow, Gypsywort, Yellow Flag, Common Duckweed, Water Mint, Hairy Willow Herb, Square Stemmed Willow Herb, Celery Leaved Buttercup, Intermediate Water Starwort, Figwort, Soft Rush, Jointed Rush, Brooklime, Coltsfoot, Brookweed, Elm, Hazel, Oak, Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Herb Robert, Honeysuckle, Broad Buckler Fern, Hedge Woundwort, Biting Stonecrop. Protected Fauna: Norfolk Hawker Dragonfly, Dunnock. Other fauna: Blackbird, Wren, Chaffinch, Coot, Moorhen, Sedge Warbler, Canada Geese, Mute Swan, Black-tailed Skimmer, Violet Ground Beetle, Painted Lady, Common Blue Butterfly.
Gunton Warren	Protected habitat: Coastal sand dunes, coastal vegetated shingle, lowland heath, maritime cliffs and slopes. Protected fauna: Adder, Dartford Warbler, Song Thrush, Linnet, Yellowhammer, Common Lizard, Ant-lion.
Gunton Wood	Protected habitats: Pond. Wildlife corridor. Protected Flora: Black Poplar. Protected fauna: Great Crested Newt, Song Thrush.
Ancient Woodland www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/INFD-5W2G8Q	
Foxburrow Wood	Protected habitats: Ponds, small area of wet woodland, ancient and semi-natural woodland. Protected species: Song Thrush, House Sparrow, Dunnock, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker

Non-designated sites (sites that are not formally identified for their biodiversity value)	
Adjacent Northfield St. Nicholas School	<p>Habitat: Allotments with hedges, compost heaps.</p> <p>Flora: Alexanders, Common Fumitory, Pellitory of the Wall, Common Nettle.</p> <p>Protected fauna: House Sparrow.</p> <p>Other fauna: Small Tortoiseshell, Small White Butterflies, Fox, Brown Rats.</p>
Arnold's Bequest	<p>Habitats: Mature trees, scrub, small spring.</p> <p>Flora: Sycamore, Elder, Suckering Elm, Alexanders, Himalayan Balsam, Elder, Bluebell.</p> <p>Protected fauna: Song Thrush, Dunnock, Tawny Owl.</p>
Belle Vue Park	<p>Habitat: Formal garden with shrubs and rank grass.</p> <p>Flora: Alexanders, Holm Oak, Bluebell, Ground Ivy, Yorkshire Fog, Cocksfoot, Scots Pine, Rhododendron.</p> <p>Protected fauna: Dunnock.</p> <p>Other fauna: Blackbird, Chaffinch, Small White Butterfly, Grey Squirrel.</p>
Church Road / Water Lane Allotments	<p>Habitat: Allotments, hedges, compost heaps and ruderal herbs.</p> <p>Flora: Bramble.</p> <p>Protected fauna: House Sparrow.</p> <p>Other fauna: Blackbird, Small Tortoiseshell, Small White Butterfly, Common Butterflies.</p>
College Meadows	<p>Habitats: Species poor improved grassland with a hedge boundary.</p> <p>Flora: Common Nettle, Ground Ivy, White Clover, Creeping Buttercup, Hog Weed.</p> <p>Protected fauna: House Sparrow, Starling.</p>
Disused railway Gunton (additional site)	<p>Habitats: Overgrown railway embankment with rank grass and scrub.</p> <p>Flora: Blackthorn, Elder, Holm Oak, Ash, Pedunculate Oak, Wood Avens, Sheep Sorrel, Caper Spurge, Yorkshire Fog, Timothy Grass, Wild Strawberry, Tree Lupin, Black Knapweed, Hop Trefoil, Common Vetch, Hairy Tare.</p> <p>Protected fauna: Song Thrush.</p>
Grassland at Pleasurewood Hills	<p>Protected habitats: Lowland hay meadow, ponds.</p> <p>Flora: Purple Orchid, Green Winged Orchid, Twayblade.</p> <p>Protected fauna: Great Crested Newts, Grass Snake.</p>
Jenkins Green	<p>Habitats: Small pond surrounded by grass and trees.</p> <p>Flora: Black Bryony, Meadowsweet, Common Fleabane, Bramble, Gorse, Osier, Common Reed.</p>
Kensington Gardens	<p>Habitats: Formal gardens and lawns with a small pond.</p> <p>Flora: Holm Oak, Common Duckweed, Reed, Water Figwort, Pellitory of the Wall.</p> <p>Protected fauna: House Sparrow, Hedgehog, Starling.</p> <p>Other fauna: Chaffinch, Willow Warbler, Collared</p>

	Dove, Wood Pigeon.
Land east of Peto Way, Lowestoft	Habitats: Mature trees and scrub. Flora: Nipplewort, Daisy, Smooth Sow Thistle, Spear Thistle, Ragwort, Yarrow, Common Nettle, Ground Ivy, Cut Leaved Cranesbill, Sycamore, Copper Beech, White Poplar, Scots Pine, Privet, Bramble.
Lowestoft Cemetery	Habitats: Grasslands with avenues of mature trees. Flora: Lime, Horse Chestnut, Red Clover, Mouse-ear Hawkweed, Common Cats-ear, Autumn Hawkbit, Biting Stonecrop, Yarrow. Fauna: Grey Squirrel, Chaffinch, Robin, Blackbird, Magpie.
Moncton Avenue	Protected habitats: Wet woodland, ponds. Flora: Beech, Willow, Oak, Holly, Ivy, Common Duckweed, Sycamore.
Net Drying Area	Protected habitat: Acid grassland. Protected fauna: Skylark, Starling.
Normanston Park Allotments	Habitats: Overgrown allotments with hedge boundary, wood piles, compost heaps. Flora: Common Nettle, Dock, Ground Ivy, White Clover, Bramble, Comfrey. Protected fauna: House Sparrow. Other fauna: Chaffinch, Wren, Greenfinch, Wood Pigeon.
North Beach: Ness Point to Links Hill	Habitat: Coastline.
North Denes Former Campsite and land east of Sparrows Nest	Protected habitat: Acid grassland. Protected species: Linnet, Dunnock.
Off Millennium Way, Lowestoft	Habitat: Species rich meadow. Flora: Sallow Salix, Blackthorn, Hawthorn, Holme Oak, Gorse, Bramble, Orchids, Ragwort, Perforate St. John's Wort, Hogweed, Wild Radish, Black Horehound, Ribwort Plantain, Greater Plantain, Mugwort, White Clover, White Campion, Cats Ear, Hairy Tare, Mayweed, Coltsfoot, Daisy, Beaked Hawksbeard, Fox-and-cubs, Meadow Vetchling, Goatsbeard, Pineapple Mayweed, Hedge Bindweed, Common Storksbill, Common Chickweed, Common Fleabane, Common Sow Thistle, Creeping Thistle. Fauna: Small White, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper and Essex Skipper butterflies, Migrant Hawker Dragonfly.
Sparrow's Nest	Habitats: Formal gardens and shrubs. Flora: Bluebell, Holm Oak, Alexanders, Ground Ivy, Holly, Hogweed. Protected fauna: Dunnock, Bats, Hedgehogs, Tawny Owl. Other fauna: Collared Dove, Blackbird, Robin, Spotted Fly Catcher, Grey Squirrel.
St. Peter's Churchyard	Habitats: Rough grass, medium sized trees.

	<p>Flora: Field Maple, Yew, Daisy, Germander Speedwell, Dandelion, Creeping Cinquefoil, Black Medick, Yarrow, Pellitory-of-the-wall, Selfheal.</p> <p>Fauna: Greenfinch, Chaffinch, Speckled Wood Butterfly.</p>
Wisett Way	<p>Habitats: Pond surrounded by grassland and trees.</p> <p>Flora: Poplar, Oak, Hawthorn, Bramble.</p> <p>Protected fauna: House Sparrow.</p>
Woodland south of Princes Walk	<p>Habitat: Woodland with a mixture of young and mature trees.</p> <p>Flora: Lime, Crack Willow, Sycamore, Silver Birch, Sallow, Elder, Hazel, Hawthorn, Privet, Gorse, Bramble, Elm, Ivy, Common Nettle, Rosebay Willow Herb, Ragwort, Perforate St. John's Wort, Hogweed, Wild Radish, Black Horehound, Ribwort Plantain, Nipplewort, White Campion, Herb Robert, Common Mallow, Barron Brome.</p> <p>Protected fauna: House Sparrow.</p> <p>Other fauna: Wood Pigeon, Blackbird, Robin, Wren, variety of invertebrates.</p>
South Lowestoft	
Special Areas of Conservation	
None	None
Special Protection Areas http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-162	
None	None
Site of Special Scientific Interest www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/Special/sssi/index.cfm	
Pakefield to Easton Barents	<p>Habitats: Vegetated shingle, including eroding shingle, stable shingle, grassland, dunes.</p> <p>Flora: Rare vascular plants.</p> <p>Protected fauna: Bitterns, Marsh Harriers.</p>
County Wildlife Site www.suffolkbiodiversity.org/wildlife-sites.aspx	
Brooke Yachts and Jeld-Wen Mosaic	<p>Protected habitats: Small area of intertidal mudflat.</p> <p>Habitats: Woodland, scrub, rank and short grassland.</p> <p>Flora: Bramble, Privet, Hawthorn Scrub with dense patches of Gorse and woodland containing mature Oaks, Sycamore with Silver Birch, diseased Dutch Elm trees, Hairy Sedge, Creeping Thistle, and Meadow Vetchling, Biting Stonecrop, English Stonecrop, Common Centaury, Cocksfoot, Wall Barley, Yorkshire Fog, perennial Rye Grass, Sea Couch, Barren Brome, rough Meadow Grass, Soft Rush, Saltmarsh Rush, Common Nettle, Rosebay Willow Herb, Great Willow Herb, Common Cleavers, Ragwort, Perforate St John's Wort, Hogweed, Creeping Thistle, Wild Radish, Black Horehound, Ribwort Plantain, Greater Plantain, Sea Plantain, Buckshorn Plantain, Prickly Sow Thistle, Smooth Sow Thistle, Ox-eye Daisy, Wild Carrot,</p>

	<p>Common Sorrel, Sheep's Sorrel, Yarrow, Mugwort, Haresfoot Clover, White Clover, White Campion, Common Mallow, Dog Rose, Birdsfoot Trefoil, Hop Trefoil, Cats Ear, Great Mullein, Hairy Tare, Mayweed, Coltsfoot, Silver Weed, Daisy, Selfheal, Honeysuckle, Willow, Sallow.</p> <p>Protected fauna: Common Lizard, Dunnock, Linnet, Herring Gull.</p>
Kirkley Ham	<p>Protected habitats: Fen, reedbed, wet woodland, acid grassland. Other habitats: Rough grassland, gorse and ponds.</p> <p>Flora: Gypsy Wort, Tufted Vetch, Corn Spurrey, Yellow Flag Iris, Bladder Campion, Purple Loosestrife, Celery-Leaved Buttercup, Marsh Willow Herb, Southern Marsh Orchid.</p> <p>Protected fauna: Common lizard, Song Thrush, Yellow Hammer, Reed Bunting, Song Thrush, Wren, Meadow Pipit, Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff, Reed Warbler, Reed Bunting, Common Darter, Blacked-tailed Skimmer, Blue-tailed Damselfly, Large White, Meadow Brown, Red-tailed Bumble-bee</p>
Old Golf Course (West)	<p>Habitats: Scrub and rough grass.</p> <p>Flora: Bramble, Gorse, Hemlock, Tansy, Tufted Vetch, Mugwort.</p> <p>Protected fauna: Song Thrush, Dunnock, Linnet.</p> <p>Other fauna: Meadow Brown, Small White, Small Skipper, Gatekeeper, Peacock.</p>
Pakefield Beach	<p>Habitats: Dunes and vegetated shingle.</p> <p>Flora: Sea Holly, Yellow Horned Poppy, Curled Dock, Sea Pea, Sea Kale, Sea Beet, Biting Stonecrop, Sea Sandwort, Marram Grass, Haresfoot Clover.</p> <p>Protected species: House Sparrow, Slow Worm</p>
Pakefield Cliffs	<p>Protected habitats: Vegetated shingle, maritime slopes and cliffs.</p> <p>Flora: Curled Dock, Sea Pea, Sea Kale, Sea Beet, Sea Sandwort, Marram Grass, Scented Agrimony, Wild Carrot, Halberd-leaved Orache, Bee Orchid.</p> <p>Protected fauna: House Sparrow, Starling.</p> <p>Other fauna: Sand Martins, Dartford Warblers</p>
Pakefield Park	<p>Protected habitats: Acidic grassland. Habitats: Rough grassland, scrub, woodlands.</p> <p>Fauna: Sheep Sorrel, Black Knapweed, Smooth Hawks-beard, Broom, Gorse, Pedunculate Oak, Hawthorn, Blackthorn.</p> <p>Protected fauna: Bullfinch, Song Thrush.</p> <p>Other fauna: Chaffinch, Robin, Blackbird, Blue Tit, Magpie, Wren, Chiffchaff, Wood Pigeon, Treecreeper, Meadow Brown, Large White, Ringlet.</p>
Non-designated sites (sites that are not formally identified for their biodiversity value)	

Area between Stradbroke Road and Silverwood Close	<p>Habitats: Rank grass and scrub.</p> <p>Flora: Bracken, Nettles, Ground Ivy, White Clover, Creeping Buttercup, Greater Burdock, Hops, Indian Balsam.</p> <p>Protected fauna: House Sparrow.</p> <p>Other fauna: Blackbird, Chaffinch, Red Admiral, Meadow Brown.</p>
Dale End	<p>Habitats: Tall grassland with scattered scrub, banks and hedgerow.</p> <p>Flora: Bristly Ox-tongue, Selfheal, Meadow Vetchling, Scarlet Pimpernel, Field Penny-cress, Tufted Vetch, Lady's Bedstraw, Birds-foot Trefoil, Bladder Campion, Field Scabious, Musk Mallow, Black Knapweed, Imperforate St Johns Wort, Sea Buckthorn, Crested Dog's-tail, Creeping Thistle, Field Maple.</p> <p>Fauna: Chaffinch, Blackbird, Speckled Wood, Meadow Brown, Small White, Black Tailed Skimmer.</p>
Grove Primary School Grounds	<p>Habitat: Secondary woodland.</p> <p>Flora: Bluebells, Hornbeam, Ash, Field Maple, Hawthorn, Red Campion, Hogweed, Common Chickweed, Black Medick.</p> <p>Fauna: Blackbird, Wren, Chaffinch, Large White, Speckled Wood, Ringlet, Grey Quirrel, Fox.</p> <p>Protected fauna: House Sparrow.</p>
Kirkley Cemetery	<p>Habitats: Cemetery.</p> <p>Flora: Corsican Pine, Common Nettle, Ground Ivy, White Clover, Creeping Buttercup, Smooth Hawksbit, Mouse-ear Hawkweed, Common Vetch, Ox-eye Daisy, Biting Stonecrop, White Clover, Red Clover.</p> <p>Protected Fauna: House Sparrow, Starling.</p> <p>Other Fauna: Green Woodpecker, Blackbird, Chaffinch, Meadow Brown Butterfly.</p>
Rear of Green Drive	<p>Habitats: Rough grassland and boundary hedge.</p> <p>Flora: Yarrow, Ribwort Plantain, White Clover, Wall Barley, Holm Oak, Ash.</p> <p>Protected Fauna: House Sparrow.</p> <p>Other fauna: Meadow Brown Butterfly, Grey Squirrel.</p>
Stradbroke Road Allotments	<p>Habitats: Allotment plots with areas of rough grassland.</p> <p>Flora: Poplar, Ivy, Oak, Sun Spurge, Petty Spurge, Knotgrass, Annual Mercury, Nipplewort, Garlic Mustard, Scarlet Pimpernel.</p> <p>Protected Fauna: House Sparrow, Song Thrush.</p> <p>Other Fauna: Wren, Blackbird, Chaffinch, Fox, Squirrel, Red Admiral, Large White Butterflies.</p>
Wildlife corridor along South Lowestoft Relief Road	<p>Protected habitats: Fen, pond. Other habitats: Grassland, scrub, trees, wet boggy areas.</p> <p>Flora: Water Plantain, Fools Watercress, Water Forget-me-not, Vipers Bugloss, Water Soldier, Water Figwort, Watercress, Common Duckweed, Canadian</p>

	<p>Waterweed, Curled Pondweed, Amphibious Bistort, Water Mint, Purple Loosestrife, Intermediate Water Starwort, Stonewort, Greater Spearwort, Bog Pondweed, Biting Stonecrop, Yarrow, Imperforate St John's Wort, Ox-eye Daisy, Weld, Tufted Vetch, Hops, Monkey Flower, Common Fleabane, Borage, Tansy.</p> <p>Protected fauna: Water Vole, Common Lizard (Kirkley Ham only), Bats.</p> <p>Other fauna: Short Tailed Voles, Squirrels, Fox, Rabbit, Chaffinch, Robin, Blackbird, Magpie, Moorhen, Wren, Treecreeper, Banded Demoiselle, Broad Bodied Chaser, Blue-tailed Damselfly, Meadow Brown, Large White, Red Admiral.</p>
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Biodiversity recommendations

General Biodiversity recommendations

Work with Suffolk Wildlife Trust and organisations that seek to improve biodiversity and access to natural wildlife areas. This may involve the enhancement of existing sites, alternative approaches to site management, inclusion of biodiversity measures in new developments, identifying areas where public access is appropriate and where it can be improved and protecting important ecological corridors.

North Lowestoft Biodiversity recommendations

Conserve and enhance existing field boundary vegetation, woodlands and wetland areas. Encourage replanting of hedgerow trees species such as oak and elm. Native planting will assist with integrating the edge of North Lowestoft with the landscape structure.

South Lowestoft Biodiversity recommendations

Encourage replanting along the existing hedgerow boundaries, principally hedgerow trees such as oak and elm. Enhance habitat linkages and restoring the historic landscape pattern. Management and creation of wetland features along the tributaries and wet ditches should be encouraged.

Natural & Semi-Natural Green Space

What is natural and semi-natural green space?

Natural and semi-natural green spaces have been defined as “land, water and geological features which have been naturally colonised by plants and animals and which are accessible on foot to large numbers of residents.”

They are areas of undeveloped land with limited or no maintenance which have been colonised by vegetation and wildlife and include woodland, railway embankments, river and canal banks, road verges and derelict land. The primary function of natural and semi-natural green space is to promote biodiversity and nature conservation but they are also important for environmental education and awareness.

This section of the Open Space Needs Assessment provides an overview of natural and semi-natural green space. It follows on from the ‘Biodiversity Distribution’ section which has considered open space with biodiversity value.

Benefits of natural and semi-natural green space

Accessible natural and semi-natural green spaces make an important contribution towards the quality of the environment in urban areas and the lives of the people who live there. They often have high community value and have a variety of benefits including:

- health and well-being: better physical and mental health;
- economics: attracts people to live and work in an area and can be a key contributor to regeneration;
- education: provides hands on experience for children with plants and animals and opportunities to learn about the environment around them;
- functional: vegetation slows runoff to reduce risk of flooding and can help mitigate air and noise pollution;
- biodiversity: provide wildlife habitats;
- children’s play: facilities for independent play, good physical health and stimulating useful learning experiences.

The Open Space Needs Assessment (2006) consulted the public to ascertain their views of natural and semi-natural green spaces in the District. A summary of the key findings is listed below:

General

- 15% go for a country walk at least weekly and 39% monthly.

- 18% never visit the countryside.
- 28% visit the Broads at least monthly.
- People who visit the countryside least tend to be elderly, less mobile or do not have private transport.
- Frequent countryside visitors live in rural areas and smaller towns
- 75% said the countryside was easily accessible.
- More than half of residents say walking paths are well signposted but only 37% say they are well-maintained.
- 46% of people identified common land in their locality and 19% identified specific village greens.
- 22% of people knew of wildlife in their local area and over half said there were not enough of these areas.

Beaches

- 3% of people use the beach daily, 40% every two weeks, 9% never visit the beach (primarily people with disabilities and without private transport).
- People living near the coast use the beach most often.
- Visits to the beach are primarily by car (60%) and 27% walk to the beach.
- Beaches trips are less spontaneous for people living away from the coast.
- Primarily used for walking, relaxing, socialising and picnics.
- 22% use the beach for swimming.
- Two main areas of concern are a shortfall of car parking facilities and toilet facilities.

Recommended standard of provision

The Open Space Needs Assessment (2006) found people living in North Lowestoft do not consider there to be sufficient access to natural and semi-natural green space. People in North Lowestoft, however, have relatively good access to beaches. On this basis Waveney considered that North Lowestoft has a good provision of natural and semi-natural green space and meets local expectations, this may be something that the town council wishes to consider when looking at Neighbourhood Planning. A standard of 2 hectares of accessible natural green space per 1000 population was recommended.

Access to natural and semi-natural green space

Natural England advocates that every household should have access to natural green space. To help achieve this Natural England encourages the use of the 'Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard' (ANGSt). The standard recommends that everyone should have access to:

- at least one accessible site 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes' walk) from home;
- at least one accessible 20-hectare site within 2km of home;
- one accessible 100-hectare site within 5km of home; and
- one accessible 500-hectare site within 10km of home.

Natural England's Analysis of Natural Greenspace Provision for Suffolk shows that access to natural and semi-natural green space is above average for sites of all sizes with at least 70% of the District's population within accessible distances of sites larger than 20 hectares. The proportion of dwellings that have good access to natural green spaces of all sizes is significantly above the Suffolk average.

Public rights of way and access to natural and semi-natural areas

There is reasonably good access to the open countryside via a network of public rights of way and the open character of the rural areas of the District. This can act to offset much of the shortfall to natural and semi-natural green space.

The new coastal path will bring more walking opportunities to Lowestoft but the closure of Tourist Information centres means that information and promotion of walks in and around Lowestoft are less available. This could be an area where the Town Council could act by having a webpage with local walks as well as leaflets.

Access to natural and semi-natural areas is often restricted to public rights of way. It is important to note that while a semi-natural site can have an area of, say 20 hectares, the public right of way might only provide access to a very small portion of this. The physical characteristics of these sites such as vegetation, drainage and sensitive habitats also act to restrict areas where public access is feasible.

Quiet country lanes provide visual connections and a sense of being in the open countryside without physically accessing semi-natural areas.

Cycle routes can provide access to natural areas in a similar fashion as walkways. Quiet country lanes, historic market towns, internationally important wildlife sites and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are all accessible by foot and cycle to some extent. Promoted cycle routes provide an opportunity to encourage greater awareness and access to green infrastructure and support initiatives to improve public health.

Improving public walkways and public rights of way has the potential to encourage greater activity in the open countryside and along the coast. An improved network of walking trails and cycle routes could also promote visitors to Lowestoft.

When encouraging people to access natural and semi-natural green space care should be taken to ensure access is appropriate to the location. Protecting important areas for flora and fauna such as Ramsar sites, SACs SPA, SSSIs and CWSs should be of primary consideration when considering how and where to improve public access.

Quality and value of natural and semi-natural green space

Waveney completed a quality and value assessment for natural and semi-natural green spaces located within the boundaries of Lowestoft and the market towns

where this was their primary use. The quality and value of publicly accessible natural and semi-natural green space reflects similar spatial patterns as other types of open space provision.

With regard to quality, North and South Lowestoft were at the bottom end of the league in Waveney by a big margin. Virtually 40% of open space in South Lowestoft was listed as low quality with 25% in North Lowestoft. High Quality open space stood at 20% for South Lowestoft and 25% for North Lowestoft. District wide only 10% of open space was low quality and only three areas had low quality open space, North & South Lowestoft and the rural areas. Across the District 63% of open space was high quality.

Natural and semi-natural green space in the North Lowestoft area

There is good access to natural and semi-natural green space in North Lowestoft. There is a variety of different forms of green space that provide opportunities for a range of activities. The beach provides significant value for its recreational uses and wildlife habitats which are well connected to areas of green space going inland. Local Nature Reserves are located along Lake Lothing which connects into Normanston Park and then onto the green corridor of Millennium Way.

Gunton Warren is a Local Nature Reserve adjacent to the beach and Gunton Wood. Between these two areas is the Great Eastern Linear Park (a disused railway line) providing a quality pedestrian/cycle route through a well-established tree lined corridor. A number of natural and semi natural areas extend inland from Gunton including Foxborrow Wood which acts to connect with the coastal green spaces with the urban area and the open countryside.

The area with the poorest access to natural and semi-natural green space in North Lowestoft is in the vicinity of Lake Lothing. South Beach in South Lowestoft mitigates some of this shortfall, however, this is not green space.

Natural & semi-natural green space	Area (Ha)	Catchment distance
Arnold's Bequest	0.66	300m
Corton Wood	7.03	300m
Foxborrow Wood	4.79	300m
Gunton Warren	20.51	2km
Gunton Wood	5.47	300m
Kesgrave Drive	5.99	300m
Leathes Ham	6.01	300m
Monckton Avenue	0.36	300m
Wissett Way	0.28	300m

Natural and semi-natural green space in the South Lowestoft area

The areas of Kirkley and Pakefield have good access to natural and semi-natural green space in spaces such as Pakefield Park, Pakefield Cliffs and the beach. A

number of quality green corridors such as Silverwood Close provide traffic free areas for movement and wildlife habitats. To the west of South Lowestoft, the Carlton Marshes provides a diverse natural green space that supports recreational and education activities. The site is also supported by an education centre. Kirkley Ham, Pakefield Beach and Pakefield Park.

Natural & semi-natural green space	Area (Ha)	Catchment distance
Kirkley Ham	0.72	300m
Pakefield Beach	6.68	300m
Pakefield Park	5.95	300m

North Lowestoft Natural and semi-natural green space recommendations

Greater publicity about local areas of biodiversity interest may encourage more people to visit natural and semi-natural green spaces for their biodiversity and recreational value. This could also promote the importance of local areas of biodiversity in the wider regional context, as an educational resource and also the work that local community groups are involved in to enhance these areas.

Support proposals to extend the coastal path along the coastline when opportunities arise.

South Lowestoft Natural and semi-natural green space recommendations

Signage and promotion of walking trails such as the Angles Way and information about flora and fauna along the route could enhance the route towards Beccles for both physical activity and as an educational resource.

Greater information about local features and characteristics of the Waveney coast (such as the information boards in Pakefield) and the walk south towards Kessingland and Southwold may appeal to residents and visitors in the area.

Protect the Strategic Gap between South Lowestoft and Kessingland to preserve the character of the two settlements.

Parks and gardens

Parks and gardens provide accessible, high quality open space to be enjoyed by the general public. Characteristically they are enclosed, designed, constructed and maintained to be used by all sections of the community and catering for a range of formal and informal activities.

Being multi-functional open spaces, they are more likely to be destinations for people to use compared to smaller open spaces closer to home. With a greater number of activities and designed space they function as important social venues for individuals and small groups. Parks and gardens are high value spaces and can be an important focal point in a community that contribute towards the identity of an area assist with creating a sense of place.

Parks and gardens of high quality and high value can have many positive attributes that improve an area. By creating attractive environments, they are a contrast to the built-up area, as well as improve well-being and mental health. Offering a wide range of sports and physical activities can encourage people to participate in physical activity that will have positive fitness and physical health benefits. By removing toxins from the air and creating ecological buffers that reduce noise they provide an antidote to the stresses of urban living. Economically an area will benefit from parks and gardens. A good positive image of an area can attract visitors, inward investment, assist with retaining existing businesses and providing facilities in employment areas.

The location, distribution and size of parks have generally been decided in times past as development came forward. Many of these reflect the historic patterns of urban growth in the town. This is particularly the case for centrally located parks and gardens. There are different types of parks that have different roles in the community. Larger parks can have a more important focus at the neighbourhood scale while small parks can have a more local focus.

Accessibility

The Waveney Open Space Needs Assessment (2006) consulted the public to ascertain their views of parks and gardens in the District. A summary of the key accessibility findings is set out below:

- A quarter of people do not use parks because they are too far away

- About half of people access local parks on foot while about 39% use the car which may indicate a shortfall of local provision or that high quality parks are worth driving to. Use of public transport to access a park was negligible. Accessibility patterns reflect geographic distribution of parks and gardens.
- People with disabilities and mobility issues use parks less regularly and lack of ancillary facilities such as toilets further limits their value.
- Use of beaches fulfils shortfall of some park provision but is more likely to be used by people living closer to the sea.

Existing recommended standards

A standard of 0.4 hectares of park space per 1000 population was recommended. Broadly speaking Lowestoft provision sits around this level however as the town grows additional provision will be required to ensure that this situation does not change.

Hierarchy of parks

Different types of parks can fulfil different roles in the community depending on their characteristics. Across Waveney there are several park typologies.

Type of park and primary function	Size and accessibility	Characteristics
Destination park		
Weekend and occasional visits mainly on foot but also by car and serves as an attraction to visitors.	Park greater than 4.4ha in size. Catchment distance over 1km.	Open space with varied landscape and general facilities for active and passive recreation. Children's play space with a good of equipment for all age groups. Car parking provision, toilets, and possibly catering facilities.
Local park		
For pedestrian visitors including residents and workers.	Park greater than 2.5ha but less than 4.4ha in size. Between 400m and 1000m walking distance from home (10-15 minutes).	Children's play area, sitting out areas and some outdoor recreation.
Satellite park		
Pedestrian visits especially by the elderly and parents with children. Most useful in areas of high-density housing and for workers in employment areas.	Park less than 2.5ha in size and within 400m walking distance from home (5 minutes).	Small children's play area, sitting out areas, grass and shrubbery planting.

Provision of parks and gardens in the North Lowestoft area

Five parks are found in North Lowestoft and these constitute about a quarter of the total provision of open space. Normanston Park and Gunton Community Park are well integrated into their respective residential areas and the Great Linear Park provides a natural corridor. Sparrow's Nest and Belle Vue Park are not peripheral to the residential population but their location adjacent to the sea limits their value and connections to the resident population. These two parks, however, provide a wider role by connecting residents to the seaside and providing an attractive environment for visitors to the area. This will further be enhanced with the development of the East of England Park and any work done in the North Denes area.

Parks and gardens in the North Lowestoft area (Waveney designations)		
Park	Type of park	Area (ha)
Sparrow's Nest Park	Destination	2.71
Normanston Park	Local	9.63
Belle Vue Park	Satellite	1.92
Gunton Community Park	Satellite	2.51

The town council may wish to re-visit these designations and consider how they are improved to increase their value to the town.

Provision of parks and gardens in the South Lowestoft area

South Lowestoft has the most significant amount of parks and gardens both quantitatively and the number of sites (6 sites).

Parks and gardens in the South Lowestoft area (Waveney designations)		
Park	Type of park	Area (ha)
Wellington Gardens	Destination	0.62
Kensington Gardens	Local	1.31
Kirkley Fen Park	Local	3.42
Britten Road	Satellite	1.12
Chaukers Crescent	Satellite	2.35
Rosedale Park	Satellite	2.95

Again, the town council may wish to re-visit these designations and consider how they are improved to increase their value to the town. Wellington Gardens has not been passed to the town council and its designation as a Destination Park is interesting due to its size and lack of a lot of the features that contribute to a Designation Park whereas Kensington Gardens actually is closer to the criteria.

Quantity of Parks and Gardens

Parks and gardens provide important areas for recreation and leisure and contribute significantly to the immediate surroundings and the wider townscape. Parks in Lowestoft have a variety of facilities available to encourage people from all ages to be active including play areas for children of different ages, ponds, planting, paved pathways that can be used in all weather, open areas for informal activities, semi natural areas for biodiversity and amenity and playing pitches and non-pitches for sport. Open spaces within towns often contain different facilities encouraging a wider cross-section of the community to use them and this variety increases their importance.

When assessing quantitative provision, it is important to recognise that parks provide space that compliments other forms of open space in an area. While a space such as Normanston Park has a primary use as a park it also has a secondary use as amenity green space, play areas and sports pitches. These are discussed elsewhere in this report, however, the multi-functional role these spaces provide for the community increases their importance. When new open spaces are provided in the future consideration should be given to the inclusion of facilities that would be consistent with a satellite park which are of higher quality and value than most other open space typologies in Lowestoft.

Normanston Park has a catchment area that covers future residential area bordering the south shore of Lake Lothing (Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood). The new residential development will have access to new amenity and play spaces in the area, however, access to a park will be limited. The proposed pedestrian/cycle bridge over Lake Lothing would connect the Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood with Normanston Park enhancing the townscape and providing access to open space to encourage people to participate in physical and recreational activities. This connection will also improve access to open space for existing residents in the Whitton area where there is an identified shortfall of open space provision.

Access to parks (and other open spaces and facilities) can be restricted by busy roads and other obstructions such as railways which in turn can affect the actual catchment area of an open space or its value to local residents. Examples of this are in South Lowestoft where large open spaces are available but access is restricted by its surroundings. In Kirkley, Kirkley Fen Park is a multi-functional open space, however, Tom Crisp Way reduces its value to people living on the west side of the road (despite pedestrian crossings).

The catchment area for a destination park is a radius of 3km (5km walking distance). These parks provide quality areas for a variety of activities but also provide facilities for parking. While the maps show all of Lowestoft are within the catchment area of a destination park this does not indicate that parks provision is adequate. In the context of local provision and accessibility, these parks should be considered as local parks. In this way it gives a more accurate representation of how accessible park space is to the community.

Quality of parks and gardens

The quality of a park reflects the provision and condition of its features and characteristics. The table below sets out the attributes assessed to understand the quality and value of parks and gardens in the town. As part of the assessments scores were standardised to make quality and value ratings comparable.

Assessed quality attributes		
Provision and condition	Extent of misuse	Characteristics and aesthetic qualities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paths and drives• Walls, railings, fences• Lighting• Trees• Shrubs and hedges• Grass• Litter bins• Dog litter bins• Seating	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Litter• Dog fouling• Vandalism• Graffiti	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Colourful• Amount of interest• Layout• Attractiveness• Fragmentation

Value of parks and gardens

All parks in the District are rated as being of medium or high value. The value of a park reflects the provision and condition of the features and characteristics. Scores were standardised to enable quality and value ratings to be comparable. The table below sets out value attributes considered as part of the site assessment.

Assessed value attributes			
Accessibility	Value of the open space	Habitat value	Characteristics and aesthetic qualities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adequate access points for pedestrians• Adequate access points for disabled users	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education• Culture• Contribution to the townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Woodland, tree groups, avenues, individual trees• Shrubs• Hedges• Natural grass• Pond, river, lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integral to surroundings• Safety• Isolated location

The importance of parks and gardens is highlighted by the quality and value ratings. The majority of parks in Lowestoft are rated high quality with only Britten Road considered to be low quality. Similarly, all parks and gardens are rated as being medium value with most being high value. The high standard of provision is likely to

encourage more people to use these spaces thereby increasing their importance in the community. Having high standards of park provision is also likely to reduce the impact of low quality amenity and play spaces scattered through residential areas. While maintaining these high standards is supported and encouraged this does not diminish the need to provide good quality and value to other open space typologies that provide more localised access to open space facilities. With limited resources available for maintaining and improving open spaces careful consideration is needed as to how best to prioritise which spaces should be maintained to which standard (rating).

Deprivation

Most parks and gardens are located in the older parts of the settlements which have disproportionately high levels deprivation. The location of parks and gardens in the town reflects the historical growth of Lowestoft over time. Well established almost all parks and gardens of medium to high quality and value. These multi-functional green spaces provide focal points in local communities and enable people to participate in a wider variety of physical activities.

In the larger sub areas where parishes and electoral areas have been group together this can mask different levels of deprivation over short distance. For example, in North Lowestoft the ward of Harbour is the most deprived in Waveney but is in the same sub area as Gunton (located in the north of the sub area) which is less deprived. Harbour has a significant deficit of open space and quality of open space facilities compared to Gunton

Britten Road and Rosedale Park provide opportunities for amenity and play activities and also improve connectivity by enabling people to walk and cycle between different residential areas. Improvements to the quality and variety of facilities provided on site will enhance the value of these open spaces to the community, an area of relatively high deprivation.

The potential to provide new parks and gardens is limited except where new development may come forward. The areas expected to accommodate significant development during the current plan period are the East of England Park in North Lowestoft and the land south of Lake Lothing (South Lowestoft) referred to as the Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood (SUN). Both of these areas are expected to have new green space provided in the form of a park. In North Lowestoft open space, Ness Point and the Drying Racks will be featured within the East of England Park and in the SUN, replacement playing fields, amenity green space and a play area should provide a focal point for the new development and improve access to green space for people living in nearby Whitton.

While the opportunity to provide a new park is less likely than for a standard amenity green space, there should be a focus on trying to deliver open space with similar levels of quality and value. Parks and gardens are likely to be located much further apart than regular open spaces, however, if they are used more frequently by the community than small spaces of lower quality that are closer to home they will be more valuable to the community overall.

Emphasis on existing parks and gardens should focus on protection and enhancement. Improving the quality and value of these green spaces will improve their importance to the community and encourage greater use of these assets. This is particularly important for parks that are well located with respect to the surrounding residential area and where the quality and value of the green spaces offering opportunities for amenity use and play are of lower quality and value.

In areas where there are deficits of parks it may be possible to improve amenity spaces in the vicinity to support an increased number of activities that bring quality and value. Such spaces provide an opportunity to create satellite parks and a focal point within an area.

As discussed in the assessment these are multi-functional open spaces that can create a focal point in an area and enhance the area in which are located for both residents and the townscape in general.

Parks and Gardens Recommendations

North Lowestoft Parks and gardens recommendations

East of England Park

The site is identified in the Lowestoft Lake Lothing and Outer Harbour Area Action Plan. The aspiration is to deliver a park that can provide new cultural/events space and links in with the surrounding area of the Ravine, the Scores and Ness Point. An open space of high quality with an identity that reflects the cultural history of the area will provide a quality facility for local residents and support tourism in the area.

South Lowestoft Parks and gardens recommendations

Britten Road

The open space at Britten Road requires the higher quality facility provision and the attractiveness of the space should be improved to encourage greater use of the space and enhance its role as a space connecting residential areas. Use different parts of the open space may be considered for alternative types of open space use currently provided to make the space more multi-functional.

Chaukers Crescent

Significant open space that is well integrated into the residential area but it offers only medium quality and value. A limited amount of play equipment is located on site and the open area is relatively featureless. Improvements could be made to the attractiveness of the area through landscaping, planting and ancillary facilities such as seating. Limited facility provision restricts the potential the site has to encourage people to use the site for informal activities.

Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood (SUN)

Good accessibility to the central open space in the SUN should be designed into the development for new residents and create good links with the existing residential area in Whitton. Pedestrian/cycle bridge will provide significant benefits for residents wanting to access to Normanston Park.

Amenity green space

Amenity green space describes green space that is designed to soften the urban fabric, provide a setting for buildings, provide small wildlife habitats and allows for informal leisure activities. Amenity green spaces are public open spaces whose primary purpose is to improve and enhance the appearance of the local environment and improve the well-being of local residents.

Amenity green space benefits the local community by improving public health, reducing stress levels, improving child development through creative play, increasing people's interaction with nature and their perception of where they live and contributing towards economic prosperity. Landscaping is an integral part of new developments and the function of amenity space(s) should be well considered to maximise the benefit to the community.

In residential areas there is often overlap in the location, character and function of communal amenity space and casual play areas for children. These are often relatively small parcels of green space with few, if any, ancillary facilities that are closely related to homes and have benefits for local residents, whether for play or general amenity.

Amenity green spaces that are for general amenity and have no ancillary facilities such as seating or defining landscape features designed for play or leisure are referred to as 'passive amenity green space' for the purposes of this report. While they are important in the context of the townscape and act to improve the local area, they do not encourage people to use the open space or facilitate leisure and recreational activities in these areas. The role of passive amenity green spaces is discussed in this report, however, as they provide limited value in terms of physical use by local residents they are not included in the open space analysis.

Existing recommended standards to provide adequate amenity green space

Open space standards provide a benchmark to assess if enough open space is provided and it is the most appropriate type of open space to meet the needs of the community.

The Fields in Trust is a national organisation that provides guidance about the provision of open space. They have set out a standard of provision of 2.4ha of open

space per 1000 population. This standard is broken down to; 0.2-0.4ha of equipped play space, 0.6-0.4ha unequipped play space (amenity space) and 1.6ha of playing pitches.

This quantitative standard was echoed in the previous Waveney Open Space Needs Assessment (2006) which suggested 0.8ha of open space in the form of equipped and unequipped play areas be provided per 1000 people with the remaining 1.6ha in the form of playing pitches. For amenity green space the 2006 assessment recommended a quantitative standard of 0.6ha per 1000 people. In effect this means that 0.2ha of open space should be in the form of equipped play space and 0.6ha should be amenity green space. This standard was considered appropriate to reflect the realistic expectations of the local population. The assessment also suggested residents should have access to this type of space within 100m walking distance from home (one-minute walk).

The need for amenity space relates to the type of development. A residential development with large gardens will have a lower need for amenity space compared to flatted developments or areas of sheltered housing where gardens are often not provided. However, where a housing area is likely to contain a significant number of children, amenity green space also functions as a space to play for many.

When residential development is proposed it is important to consider how amenity spaces will contribute towards the townscape and how they will be used by local residents. In areas where residential properties have gardens it is likely that small amenity spaces will have limited value in comparison to a larger green space that provides more of a focal point for the community and provides the opportunity for a wider variety of activities.

The need for amenity space is not limited to housing areas. The landscaping associated with many non-residential developments, such as business parks, should be included in the consideration of need. In these areas quality is as important as quantity. Such landscaping improves the setting of the employment areas and can be used by employees.

When delivering new open space as part of new development Waveney District Council applies a 'minimum acceptable size standard'. This standard ensures that new open spaces are a minimum size of 0.1ha with no dimension being smaller than 15m (this is equivalent to about two tennis courts). This is the minimum size considered to be acceptable for children's play and other informal activities. This is probably a minimum level that the Town Council would want to adopt,

In Lowestoft green space where amenity is the primary function can have a variety of roles including: large and small green spaces adjacent to residential developments, village greens and ancillary spaces adjacent to equipped play areas. Often green spaces can have amenity as a secondary function such as parks, gardens and playing fields.

Deficiencies of green space with amenity as the primary use

The Waveney Open Space Needs Assessment (2006) suggested a quantitative standard of provision of 0.6ha per 1000 people. While it is difficult to provide new open space within existing settlement boundaries given the developed nature of these areas, this standard sets a benchmark to ensure adequate open space is provided in the future for new development. It also highlights the importance of improving the quality, value and accessibility to open space where there is a quantitative shortfall. Overall, there is adequate provision of open space in the District in terms of quantity.

North and South Lowestoft have the greatest amount of amenity green space provided compared to other areas in the District, however, they also have the largest populations. North Lowestoft (Including Corton, Oulton & Oulton Broad) has a total of 18 open spaces where amenity is the primary function and almost 18ha amenity green space above the amount required. South Lowestoft (including Carlton Colville and Oulton Broad) has 26 amenity spaces but has a deficit of 2.22ha of amenity green space (Figure 5.2).

Accessibility in the North Lowestoft area

Overall coverage is relatively good. A majority of open spaces with amenity value are larger than 1 hectare which provides greater opportunities for use and accordingly gives them a wider catchment. These larger spaces commonly offer amenity value as part of a multi-functional open space with play areas often present. The smaller amenity spaces are generally those with equipped play areas as the primary use and the amenity spaces has been provided to support unequipped play.

Small open spaces that can support informal activities are limited and it is important to consider how these types of open spaces relate to their surroundings and how they contribute to the wider open space network.

Provision of amenity open space in the central Lowestoft, particularly Harbour ward. Opportunities should be sought to improve access to quality open spaces that offer good value to partially offset these deficits.

Accessibility in the South Lowestoft area

Overall coverage is slightly below the standard. Similar to North Lowestoft this coverage is primarily related to the larger catchments associated with open spaces greater than 1 hectare. Access to open space with amenity value smaller than 1 hectare is limited as represented by the smaller, darker catchment areas. This highlights the importance of larger open space provision. These larger open spaces are generally multi-functional increasing their value to the community.

Kirkley, Whitton and Pakefield have the lowest amount of amenity green space, however, in Pakefield this is partially offset by easy access to the beach.

In these aforementioned areas emphasis should be placed on improving quality and value to mitigate the impact of reduced accessibility to open spaces.

Quality and value of amenity green space

The quality of an amenity green space is reflective of the provision and condition of its features and characteristics. Quality is primarily focussed on the site itself which includes what is provided on site, the condition of facilities and the immediate surroundings. The attributes assessed for quality are set out below. The scores were standardised to allow comparisons between quality and value and for consistency across all open spaces that were assessed.

Quality attributes		
Provision and condition	Extent of misuse	Characteristics and aesthetic qualities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paths and drives• Walls, railings, fences• Trees• Shrubs and hedges• Grass• Litter bins• Dog litter bins• Seating	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Litter• Dog fouling• Vandalism• Graffiti	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Colourful• Amount of interest• Layout• Attractiveness• Fragmentation

The value of an amenity green space describes to how the space relates to its surroundings and the function it provides for the local community. The value of a space is much more dependent on what is provided and what it offers the community to encourage recreational use. Quality and value are interrelated. The attributes assessed for quality are set out below. The scores were standardised to allow comparisons between quality and value and for consistency across all open spaces that were assessed.

Assessed value attributes			
Accessibility	Value of the open space	Habitat value	Characteristics and aesthetic qualities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adequate access points for pedestrians	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education• Culture• Contribution to the townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Woodland, tree groups, avenues, individual trees• Shrubs• Hedges• Natural grass	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integral to surroundings• Safety• Isolated location

Quality of amenity green space

Spaces of higher quality are more likely to encourage people to use them. These spaces have the potential to be more of a focal point in the local community, particularly for those living nearby.

Amenity spaces with a quality rating of 'medium' are generally considered to be ordinary and unremarkable but provide space that is of value. Characteristically these spaces have limited facilities to encourage a solid cross section of the community to use them and visually often lack structured features such as landscaping and planting.

Spaces that are of low quality have few endearing features that capture the interest of potential users. Low quality spaces generally discourage use and offer low value to the community.

Consideration should be given to improvements to the quality of low quality spaces to make them more attractive to encourage people to use them. Particular attention should be given to the role they are intended to play in the community.

Value of green space with amenity as the primary use

Spaces that are of high value relate well to neighbouring built up areas (residential or employment) in both the immediate vicinity and the wider surroundings of the townscape. They provide a range of activities that encourage people to use the space and can provide for a variety of cultural and educational needs. Spaces are important in built up areas and provide recreational activities and a contrast to the built environment.

Spaces with medium value are an important asset within the built environment and should be considered to be of a higher standing than medium quality ratings which demonstrate a standard which more or less meets the status quo. This is because they reflect the importance to the community rather than just characteristics of the space in isolation. While it can be difficult to improve the value of an open space within the built environment 'medium' value should be viewed as the minimum standard to be provided as part of future open space provision to be an adequate facility for the community.

This is an important consideration whether it be for new development or for existing sites that have other uses such as 'play' which may be reconsidered as part of any process of devolution

Quality and value of amenity spaces in the North Lowestoft area

Amenity spaces in North Lowestoft are generally of higher value but with lower levels of quality. Small open spaces in particular consistently demonstrate low to medium quality and value. These sites often have amenity as a secondary function to support

unequipped play activities. Sites in Harbour Ward are in need of improvement to offer greater value to the community.

Adjacent to the coast are located several open spaces with quality and value ranging from one end of the spectrum to the other. As part of the Lowestoft Lake Lothing and Outer Harbour Area Action Plan this area is identified as the East of England Park. As part of a key area to contribute towards the regeneration of Lowestoft the East of England Park will seek to improve the quality of these open spaces and make them a more valuable asset for the local community.

The Town Council may have a different opinion on the quality and value of amenity green space. For example, Phase 4 of Tingdene is designated both low quality and low value as is the entire area of the Denes apart from the Oval itself whilst the area designated as the new East of England park is designated high value.

Quality and value of amenity spaces in the South Lowestoft area

Similar to North Lowestoft the amenity green spaces of higher quality offering greater value to the community are the larger amenity open spaces. The importance of these larger open spaces is reflected by the lower quality of small open spaces that offer less value to local residents which is less likely to encourage people to use them.

The catchment areas of amenity green spaces larger than 1 hectare show a relatively good coverage of the residential area, however, there are significant gaps in quality provision. Whitton, Pakefield and Kirkley are areas where there are issues of limited access to open space and in particular limited access to open space with quality provision and value. Consideration should be given to how these issues can be addressed in these areas.

As part of the assessments the scoring of some sites may not reflect the full importance to the local community. This is particularly the case where facilities may be provided on a site temporarily and placed into storage once an activity has been completed.

Quality and value of green space with amenity as a secondary use

Open spaces that have amenity as a secondary function tend to be of higher quality and value compared to open space where amenity is the primary function. North Lowestoft and South Lowestoft have sites where amenity green space is of both low quality and value. These lowly rated spaces generally offer limited opportunities for activities and many do not have the basic ancillary facilities such as seating or planting that have potential to capture local interest.

Quality and value of green space with amenity use overall

Green space with amenity use as either a primary or secondary use is generally of a satisfactory to good standard with a majority of spaces being at least medium quality and medium value. There are issues, however, that the layout and provision of ancillary facilities does not reflect the character of the surrounding area.

Across the Lowestoft amenity spaces appear fairly generic and improvements to landscaping, planting and ancillary facilities would markedly improve their value to the local area and as a wider network of open spaces. South Lowestoft has significantly more individual open spaces and the quality and value of provision are good. In contrast, North Lowestoft has more amenity space but the proportion of low quality and value spaces is significant.

Deprivation

Overall, the quantity of amenity green space does not reflect levels of deprivation. This demonstrates that amenity spaces are maintained to a consistent standard across the town. In areas where there are higher levels of deprivation improved access to quality amenity green space will contribute towards the enhancement of the area and encourage people to be more active and use these public spaces.

The quality and value of amenity green space (where amenity is the primary use) does not have a strong relationship with the amount of deprivation between sub areas. This in part results from smaller areas of high deprivation being masked by areas of low deprivation within the sub area.

Passive amenity green space

A significant number of open spaces provide visual amenity value but offer limited value for physical use. These spaces in the context of this open space needs assessment are classified as 'passive amenity spaces'.

While some spaces are designed to provide openness and colour to enhance the townscape and street scene others appear to have an unclear role in the built-up area. Some of the green spaces provide seating and planting while others have no ancillary facilities to make them attractive of use or visual enhancement of the townscape. A significant number of sites have signage discouraging people from using them. Often the signage is appropriate while others are in various levels of disrepair through vandalism or faded so to be a negative contributor to the space.

Offering little value as open space for physical use these spaces have not been included as part of the amenity green space quantitative assessment and therefore do not contribute towards the quantitative total of open space provision. It is, however, considered appropriate to discuss the provision of these spaces as it highlights how open space is provided and how provision alone does not necessarily meet the needs of a community.

Quantitative provision of passive amenity space

The total amount of passive amenity space in the Waveney is approximately 10 hectares. This is about 9% of total open space provision in Lowestoft.

Quantitative provision of passive amenity green space

The quality of passive amenity green space is generally quite low. The highest proportion of low quality spaces are found in North and South Lowestoft which are also the areas with the largest amounts of open space indicating that sites more likely to be used by the public for physical activities is the focus for improvement and upkeep.

Changing the use of existing open space to an alternative open space use

Over time the role of an open space may change. For example, decommissioning or removing play equipment that has come to the end of its useful life. Consideration should be given to how a site might be improved to encourage use and avoid creating passive amenity spaces that offer little value. If left unequipped consideration should be given to additional planting. New landscaping may enhance the space and the setting of an open space and retain its value to the community and townscape.

Where an open space is proposed for a change of open space use a plan of how the open space is expected to be used, the value it will offer to the community should be set out. This will help ensure that open space provision can be improved and avoid creating passive amenity green spaces unnecessarily.

Amenity green space recommendations

Amenity spaces are of higher quality and value where they are part of a larger multi-functional open space. Providing opportunities for informal activities within multi-functional open spaces will complement other activities such as play, exercise and general leisure activities. Facilities that support activities for a variety of age groups will assist with creating places that are a focal point in the community. Improving access to amenity green spaces, particularly in the most deprived areas of Lowestoft, will provide benefits for health by encouraging physical activity and helping to improve the townscape, street scene and overall image of an area.

Many amenity green spaces offer good value to the local area and the townscape; however, some offer limited benefit often reflecting their location, surroundings, provision of ancillary facilities, planting and layouts which collectively do not encourage use. A strategic management plan should be considered to improve the quality and value of amenity green spaces, increase their value to the local community and enhance the local surroundings.

Such a plan could identify: the role each amenity green space fulfils; general activities the site is likely to be used for based on ancillary facility provision; landscaping and layout of the site; if the management of the space is to retain the status quo or if there is scope for improvement; identify green spaces that could be more multifunctional that should be prioritised to encourage greater use and enhance their value to the local community.

As a management plan this would contribute towards a strategic approach to improving open space provision and the public realm. Improving the quality of passive amenity green space should be prioritised in areas with low levels of open space provision to improve the public realm.

Some passive amenity spaces provide little benefit for the community in their current form. If improvement is not considered a feasible option, its use as an alternative form of open space could be considered.

North Lowestoft Amenity green space recommendations

Central Lowestoft in General

No significant amenity green space is provided for community use and there is little opportunity to provide new amenity space owing to the built-up nature of the area. Emphasis should be placed on improving accessibility to green spaces such as the proposed East of England Park and Normanston Park. Existing passive amenity spaces and the disused railway line (Great Eastern Linear Park) could provide opportunities to support this. Accessibility should also be improved in the northern residential areas to enhance connections to Gunton Community Park and Foxburrow Road area. There may be possibilities of adding additional green space when the third crossing is completed.

Kesgrave Drive

The large amenity space at Kesgrave Drive is primarily a large grassed area with some play equipment for children. A small pond is located on site. The site is large enough to support a range of activities. Landscaping and additional planting along with ancillary facilities such as paths and seating provided in a creative manner would improve the value of the space for the community. The provision of facilities to support activities not available in Normanston Park could be provided on the site so the sites complement each other.

The open nature of the site with minimal on-site provision provides an open canvas in which to consider any possible improvements. Ideally, this would be guided by a masterplan of the site. Care would need to be taken to create a space that does not conflict with the activities provided at Normanston Park (whose grassed area is primarily set up as formal sports pitches) so the two areas complement rather than compete with each other.

South Lowestoft Amenity green space recommendations

Pakefield

Improvements should be made to amenity spaces in Pakefield and the central area in the vicinity of Britten Road and Oakwood Road.

Bixley Green

Located in a densely populated area with limited access to private garden space and public green spaces. Improving the quality of provision on the site would benefit the local area.

Play space

"Play is an essential part of every child's life and vital to their development. It is the way children explore the world around them and develop and practice skills. It is essential for physical, emotional and spiritual growth, for intellectual and educational development and for acquiring social and behavioural skills. Play is a generic term applied to a wide range of activities and behaviours that are satisfying to the child, creative to the child and freely chosen by the child" (Children's Play Council).

Play provision refers to settings where the primary aim is for the space to be used for children's play. The Children's Play Council objective for good play provision has been summarised as being able to deliver play provision that:

- is accessible, welcoming and engaging for all children and young people including those who are disabled or have specific needs and wishes; and
- recognises that children and young people of different ages have different play interests and needs.

This assessment has considered the provision of equipped play space. Complementary to equipped play provision is unequipped play space that is landscaped or provides an environment that can facilitate and support play activities. Unequipped play space is considered as part of the umbrella of 'amenity space' discussed in this report. This is consistent with the provision of open space set out in guidance provided by the Fields in Trust and Planning Practice Guidance published by the Government which does not distinguish between different types of open space and the functions they play in the community.

Equipped play areas in Lowestoft are designed and provided within parks, as play areas with adjacent open space to provide unequipped play, equipped play spaces in isolation, and within housing estates. Characteristics of the play areas themselves and those of their surroundings provide the context of how these spaces are

generally used and the role they play in the community. This often determines the quality and value they have to the local area.

When imaginatively equipped and well-maintained play areas are available these usually prove popular with both parents and children. Children are more likely to use playgrounds in parks when they are with adults but tend to use play areas nearer their homes when they are out on their own or with friends. Well used playgrounds are an important meeting place for parents as well as children.

The importance of play spaces in Lowestoft has been recognised by the Town Council and resources are being sought, along with a reserve set up, to look at significant improvements to many local play areas. Providing greater opportunities for play in equipped areas with higher quality has wider positive implications by improving the 'liveability' of an area and the perception of it as a nice place to live.

The benefits of play include:

- promoting children's development, learning, creativity and independence;
- keeping children healthy and active;
- fostering social inclusion by helping children understand the people and places in their lives, learn about their environment and develop their sense of community;
- allowing children to find out about themselves, their abilities and their interests;
- helping children to deal with difficult or painful circumstances, such as emotional stress or medical treatment;
- provide children the chance to let off steam and have fun.

Children's play can depend on a variety of factors and is influenced by:

- age, interest, experiences and influences;
- equipment and resources available to them;
- parents' feelings about their safety and security;
- area and surroundings in which they live; • accessibility of the open space they might want to use;
- variety and attractiveness of potential play spaces and current fashions.

Playgrounds located in the right location will be highly used. A good location is where children at play can 'see and be seen' by a trusted adult (usually a parent or a friend's parent) and 'where it is at' where there is a high probability that other people will pass through. Children tend to stay at any one place for a relatively short period of time but will keep returning to a popular place. A playground in a poor location, even with good equipment, is likely to have low usage and be vulnerable. Busy roads also create barriers for children and reduce accessibility to local play areas and other open spaces children may wish to use.

Fields in Trust has identified categories of play area. These are set out in below along with their defining characteristics.

Types of play space	
Play space	Play space characteristics
Unequipped play space	Open space that has elements designed and landscaped into the scheme to facilitate informal play to promote community use. This could be in the form of a number of typologies including: parks, amenity space and semi-natural green space.
Local area for play (LAP)	A small play area, approximately 100sqm, providing space and facilities to support low-key games and play with small toys. This can include landscaped features such as mounds, trees and shrubs and seats to enable adults to supervise their children. It is aimed at children up to the age of 6 years and should be designed to discourage their use by older age groups. Residents should have access to a LAP within 1 minute (100m) of their home.
Local equipped area for play (LEAP)	A play area, approximately 400sqm, providing a good range of play activities and seating for adults. It is aimed at children up to the age of 8 years but may support use by children a little younger or older than this. Its catchment area is 5 minutes walking time for an accompanied child, or approximately 400m walking distance.
Neighbourhood equipped area for play (NEAP)	A large play area, approximately 1,000sqm with at least eight types of play equipment that provide challenges and enjoyment (e.g. slides, basketball ring or ball wall) for children up to the age of 14 years but may support use by children a little younger or older than this. The site should provide seating but should be designed to reflect play activities for children that do not require supervision. Play facilities aimed at teenagers and young adults can include facilities for wheels (formally laid out areas for uses such as BMX cycle tracks and skate parks), games areas (multi-use games areas (MUGAs) for informal activities) and areas for sport that are characteristically hard surfaced to provide round year use. The site should be landscaped and have plantings to encourage use and make the site interesting for potential users. The ideal catchment area is 15 minutes walking time for either accompanied or unaccompanied children, or about 1000m walking distance.

Additional types of play areas primarily aimed to support youth play activities include:

- Multi use games areas (MUGA): enclosed area with a hard surface to be used for playing sports such as football, tennis, basketball, netball.
- Skate parks: purpose built play area to support activities using skateboards, scooters, in-line skates and BMX cycles usually containing half and quarter pipes, sliding rails, bowls, and banking and other hard surfaced equipment.

Existing recommended standards

The Open Space Needs Assessment (2006) recommended a standard of 0.2-0.3ha of equipped play space per 1000 people. This is consistent guidance provided by Fields in Trust and is based on a notional 4-14 years population density of around 32 children per hectare.

Provision of equipped play space				
Sub area	Population	Total area of accessible open space (ha)	Total area of equipped play space (ha)	Amount of open space that is equipped play space (%)
Beccles	14,796	15.06	3.59	23.84
Bungay	5,127	4.49	1.19	26.50
Halesworth	4,726	5.13	1.40	27.29
Kessingland	4,327	3.63	0.55	15.15
Nth Lowestoft	36,089	59.53	2.82	4.74
Sth Lowestoft	34,362	45.29	2.28	5.03
Southwold & Reydon	3,680	8.63	1.25	14.48
Rural	12,147	19.13	1.81	9.46
District	115,254	160.89	14.89	9.25

North and South Lowestoft have more equipped open space than sub areas with the exception of Beccles. These sub areas have the largest populations and the greatest provision of total open space, however, the proportion of open space that is equipped for play is low and well below the District average.

Equipped play space provision relative to standard

The Open Space Needs Assessment (2006) suggested a quantitative standard of equipped play provision of 0.2ha per 1000 people. This is the same standard recommended by Fields in Trust that sets out guidance on open space provision. Both areas of Lowestoft have a shortfall of equipped play provision at the time of transfer of play spaces to Lowestoft Town Council.

Provision of equipped play space provision relative to the recommended standard				
Sub area	Population	Play space required to meet 0.2ha per 1000 people standard (ha)	Total area of equipped play space (ha)	Area of equipped play space above/below standard of 0.2ha per 1000 people (ha)
North Lowestoft	36,089	7.37	2.82	-4.55
South Lowestoft	34,362	6.87	2.28	-4.59

Lowestoft has the highest areas of deprivation and also the lowest provision of equipped play parks across Waveney.

Quantitative equipped play space provision

This standard reflects the total population but is limited when considering the age demographic of different settlements. Equipped play areas are specifically orientated towards children which is only a portion of the population, however, the standard is based the total population regardless of age. While this can provide a generic representation of need it does not reflect local variations within the population in different areas.

In Waveney there is a population of 115,254 people (2011 Census). To meet the 0.2ha per 1000 people across the District a total of 23.05 hectares of equipped play space is required (approximately 23ha per 20,000 children).

In the District there are 19,885 children aged 16 or younger (2011 Census). This is equivalent to 17% of the total population. A standard of play provision that is more reflective of children rather than the population as a whole is considered more likely to provide equipment where it is needed. Adjusting the recommended standard to reflect the number of children rather than people would provide a figure of 1.15ha of equipped play space per 1000 children. It is recommended this standard is used to provide facilities which better reflects demographic trends.

Existing play provision per 1000 children varies significantly across the District. The sub areas with the largest population, North and South Lowestoft, have the lowest level of provision, 0.43ha per 1000 children and 0.37ha per 1000 children respectively. Lowestoft has significantly more children per area of play space than any other sub area and is double the District average.

Provision of different types of equipped play spaces

Provision of play areas in Lowestoft

Across the town there are a range of play spaces provide a good range of activities for local communities in the form of LEAPs, NEAPs, skate parks and MUGAs. However, the provision is well below average across Waveney with relation to number of children per play area.

Play areas in Lowestoft provide a good variety of activities for children of different ages groups (toddlers, juniors, youths). A majority of sites provide for toddlers which are reflected in the number of LAPs in the District.

Almost all sites cater for juniors which is particularly important as they explore different activities with their parents' supervision and independently. In contrast, the number of play areas that cater for youth activities is significantly lower. Several areas do not have full MUGAs.

LAPs are intended to provide small accessible play areas for toddlers. While these are an important asset they also create issues related to lack of use which in turn can reflect on quality and perception of the public realm in the local area as they wear over time.

North Lowestoft has a single NEAP (Gunton Community Park), however, much of the area has accessible play areas in the form of LEAPs. The greater number of play areas makes this form of recreation more accessible to the local community.

Accessibility

The distribution of facilities for different age groups varies across the town and also in regard of provision for different age groups.

While not the adopted standard, the following catchment areas have been used to visually demonstrate local provision: toddlers (100m), juniors (400m), youths (1000m). These catchment distances are the same as those used for LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs which are recommended standards by Fields in Trust.

The number of properties less than 100m walking distance (one-minute walk) to a play space is relatively low. This is not surprising and should be considered in the context of local housing character such as dwellings with gardens.

Barriers such as roads, train lines and water bodies can place significant limitations on the number of children who can access play areas thereby reducing the number of properties that are served by a particular site. While this is recognised catchment areas have not been amended. This is applicable to play areas such Kirkley Fen Park in South Lowestoft and Normanston Park in North Lowestoft.

Types of Equipment and Usage

Fields in Trust provides guidance about the provision of activities to create LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs rather than pieces of equipment. In this regard, play provision is better understood by the number and variety of play activities provided and how they cater for local needs rather than simply the number of pieces of equipment. The first table below sets out equipped play provision for children of different age groups and the second sets how equipped play provision relates to the number of children in each sub area.

<i>Equipped play provision for different age groups</i> Sub Area	Total number of equipped play spaces	Play spaces with toddler provision ⁶	Play spaces with junior provision	Play spaces with youth provision
Beccles	19	74% (14)	95% (18)	26% (5)
Bungay	8	86% (6)	86% (6)	29% (2)
Halesworth	10	60% (6)	100% (10)	20% (2)
Kessingland	5	100% (5)	100% (5)	20% (1)
North Lowestoft	24	79% (19)	83% (20)	28% (7)
South Lowestoft	30	60% (18)	97% (29)	7% (2)
Southwold & Reydon	7	86% (6)	100% (7)	86% (6)
Rural	16	93% (14)	100% (15)	33% (5)
District	119	73% (87)	92% (110)	24% (29)

Sub area	Children aged 0-16	Number of equipped play spaces	Number of items of play equipment	Number of activities	Average number of children per play space	Average number of items per play space	Average number of activities per play space
Beccles	2,462	19	163	246	130	9	13
Bungay	932	8	51	59	133	7	8
Halesworth	630	10	69	88	63	7	9
Kessingland	667	5	51	68	133	10	14
Nth Lowestoft	6,508	24	192	253	271	8	11
Sth Lowestoft	6,242	30	239	292	208	8	10
Southwold & Reydon	445	7	68	115	64	10	16
Rural	1,999	16	122	241	133	8	16
District	19,885	116	947	1357	170	8	12

South Lowestoft has only two sites that cater for youth activities (7% of all play areas). In contrast, North Lowestoft has six play areas catering for youths despite having less open spaces in total compared to South Lowestoft.

Provision of play facilities for children with disabilities

In Lowestoft there is very little provision of equipment available for children with disabilities. Play equipment can be used by people with different types of disabilities

in an informal manner, however, only one swing is registered as providing equipment for disabled people. This is located at Bentley Drive (North Lowestoft).

Provision of facilities for children with disabilities as part of a park would benefit people in the town. A park provides opportunities for a variety of activities that are both formal and informal in nature and the destination parks have ancillary facilities such as toilets. Potential schemes or types of appropriate equipment provision that would contribute towards meeting any latent demand should be explored anticipate opportunities that may arise to deliver such facilities.

Summary of accessibility and age group play provision in the North Lowestoft area

North Lowestoft and South Lowestoft have the poorest access to play spaces in the District. This coincides with these areas also having the largest populations. In these areas play facilities are likely to serve a wider part of the community and have greater use given there is less provision overall. Concentrated provision also creates more of a focal point in the community if facilities are of good quality and value.

North and South Lowestoft have similar provision in terms of items and activities although North Lowestoft has six fewer play spaces. North Lowestoft has only one NEAP compared to four in South Lowestoft, however, Waveney feels this demonstrates that play provision is more consistent across the sub area despite not have many larger play areas that can be the focal point for the wider community. This may be an area which the town council wishes to reconsider.

South Lowestoft has six LEAPs and four NEAPs compared with North Lowestoft which has twelve LEAPs and a solitary NEAP. The greater number of play spaces providing a good range of facilities indicates that play provision is more consistent across North Lowestoft despite not have many larger play areas that can be the focal point for the wider community. Play spaces in North Lowestoft categorised as LEAPs are more likely to fulfil the role of a NEAP due to reduced accessibility to the larger equipped play spaces. The difference in accessibility reflects the different patterns of accessibility to multi-functional provision open spaces such as parks (greater accessibility in South Lowestoft).

Play provision for juniors is good with less provision for youths and toddlers. Access to facilities in Gunton and central Lowestoft is limited and should be addressed either through new provision where opportunities arise or improvement to the quality of sites to increase value for local residents.

The Waveney Open Space Needs Assessment (2006) recommended a standard of 33 pieces of equipment per 1000 children. All sub areas in Waveney with the exception of North Lowestoft adequately provide enough equipment for children to use. The deficit in North Lowestoft is about five pieces across the sub area.

Summary of accessibility and age group play provision in the South Lowestoft area

Significant areas of South Lowestoft have poor access to play facilities (Figure 6.30). Youth provision is concentrated on two sites, both of which are local parks, and overall accessibility should be improved. Junior and toddler provision is good where open space is available, however, catchment areas demonstrate limited overlapping indicating accessibility is an issue for parts of South Lowestoft.

Quality and value of equipped play spaces

The quality and value of an equipped play area reflects the provision and condition of the features and characteristics. The attributes assessed for their quality are set out in the table below. Scores were standardised to enable quality and value ratings to be comparable.

Quality and value attributes	
Quality attributes	Value attributes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall site condition• Cleanliness• Fencing• Surface• Paths• Misuse, abuse, vandalism• Extent of usage• Supplementary facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Age group provision• Age of equipment• Accessibility for users with disabilities• Safety• Proximity to housing• Travel distance for children• Informal supervision• Isolated location• Unsafe location• Area for unequipped play

Quality and value of equipped play spaces in the North and South Lowestoft areas

North and South Lowestoft have the greatest number of play spaces. Overall, both of these sub areas have a relatively high number of spaces that are of low quality with South Lowestoft also having a disproportionately high number of play areas offering low value for the community.

In South Lowestoft access to quality play spaces is limited. Access to any play space in the central part of South Lowestoft is poor. Kirkley Fen Park offers high quality and value provision. However, access is restricted by the busy Tom Crisp Way which separates a significant part of the residential area from the park.

The value of play spaces reflects the quality ratings with small spaces generally offering low value and low quality. The south east of the South Lowestoft residential area has poor access to quality facilities offering good value. It is also significant that catchment areas generally do not overlap indicating that overall provision needs to

be improved. This does not necessarily mean new provision is required, however, areas where access is more difficult should be encouraged to use facilities further away by improving quality and value.

A similar situation is present in North Lowestoft. Quality provision in North Lowestoft is good but overall provision is sporadic with Gunton Community Park offering the greatest access to local play facilities. Areas of Lowestoft that have low levels of provision create accessibility issues for local residents. While destination parks such as Sparrows Nest can address this in part the nearest play spaces should offer high value and quality to address the shortfall. Such areas should be of at least medium quality and their catchments should overlap to demonstrate continuous provision. Where catchments do not overlap provision should be higher quality to encourage use of play areas. Access to play areas is limited in the southeast and northern parts of Lowestoft. Many sites in North Lowestoft do not offer both equipped and unequipped areas for play, reducing value.

Supporting information

The Play Space Evaluation Report (2011) published by the Waveney Play Partnership provides a more in-depth assessment of equipped play areas, their quality and their value to the local community than this assessment. In particular, the Play Space Evaluation Report assess the quality and value of provision for different age groups (toddler, junior, youth) whereas this assessment has taken a more holistic approach to the site overall. The Play Space Evaluation Report may be used to inform decision making about play areas that should be prioritised and in which manner however this should be combined with community opinion and views from the youth of the town.

Deprivation

The quality and value of equipped play spaces has little correlation with the level of deprivation at the sub area level used in this assessment. At a more localised level there may be a stronger relationship, however, the pattern of quality and value of equipped play spaces overall demonstrates that provision is quite well distributed across the District although perhaps not across Lowestoft.

The provision of quality play equipment that offers good value is well distributed across the District however Lowestoft needs more consideration. There is little correlation between the level of deprivation in an area and how well quality play spaces are provided. This demonstrates good awareness of local provision and is a good baseline to consider how existing play spaces are maintained and where future improvements may be required.

At present issues related to equipped play space and deprivation are more closely related to the actual provision of open space and play space in a community

(surroundings, distribution and accessibility) rather than the type or quality of play equipment provided on the site.

Equipped play space recommendations

Where play spaces are proposed as part of new development they should be well integrated into the development with good overlooking aspect to improve security and encourage use of the facilities.

Provision of equipped play spaces with a variety of activities for different age groups in multifunctional open spaces provides a greater focal point. Increased visibility will improve the sense of safety and security and make play spaces more attractive to use. Play spaces located in areas where they are obscured from public view should be avoided.

Improved access to open spaces and equipped play areas, particularly in areas where there is limited scope for providing new play space, will encourage greater use. This can be through visual enhancements through landscaping along a route or reducing the physical effect of barriers such as poor road crossings and improving the condition of footpaths that connect residential roads.

There is very limited access to play equipment for children with disabilities. An assessment could be undertaken to identify if disability provision is required and where these might be most appropriately located to maximise accessibility.

If equipped play spaces are considered for decommissioning, as the equipment comes to the end of its lifespan and is not replaced, a plan should be prepared setting how the site will be improved through landscaping, alternative facilities or other uses. This will ensure the space retains value for the community and continues to be of use. This will avoid creating passive amenity spaces with little character or value to the local area and residents. However decommissioning should only take place where it is shown that there is no longer a need for the play area and community consultation has taken place.

A schedule setting out the anticipated lifespan of existing play provision should be in place to assist with identifying future improvements.

North Lowestoft Equipped play space recommendations

Love Road

The passive amenity space located at Love Road should be improved with landscaping, planting and a play area. The area has some of the highest deprivation in the District and play provision in this area is poor. The site would benefit from a masterplan to ensure delivery of a space offering value to the community,

St Margaret's Plain

Improvements would benefit the area which has limited access to play space, is a deprived area and there is a significant amount of flatted development (properties with no private garden space).

Thirlmere Walk

Improving access and the quality of the play space (and adjacent unequipped/amenity area) will improve provision in an area where access is limited.

Cambrian Crescent

The area in the vicinity of Sands Lane in Oulton has little open space provision and this is reflected in the small amount of play provision. The only equipped play space on grass is located on Cambrian Crescent and is low quality and low value. The space requires improvement in both play provision and landscaping. It is also likely support some of the development in the anticipated new Woods Meadow development on the land immediately to the north. The significant shortfall of provision in this area highlights the need to provide both a LEAP and a NEAP in the Woods Meadow development. In addition, the play space located at Dunston Drive is expected to link to the Woods Meadow development via a possible foot/cycle way and improvements to this site would benefit existing residents as well as those in the Woods Meadow area. Good pedestrian and cycle connections to the Woods Meadow Country Park will benefit the area. Woods Meadow The pedestrian/cycle way proposed to go north-south Cambrian Crescent provides an opportunity to create a movement corridor with an additional function for amenity and semi-natural value. Potential for a trim trail or outdoor gym equipment could be explored when the development comes forward to provide new facilities in an area with a shortfall of facilities which would encourage greater use of the space.

Equipped play spaces provided as part of the development should enhance provision for all age groups for new residents and wider parts of the community. These spaces should be designed to encourage use and a sense of security/safety to provide greatest benefit. Play spaces should be well linked to the surrounding residential areas.

Normanston Park

Normanston Park is a key open space in the area offering a variety of play, leisure and sport activities. The LEAP located in the centre of the park is of medium quality and value. Improving the quality of equipment and increasing the number of activities would complement the existing provision of a skate park for youths and a small LAP in the northwest corner of the site. Normanston Park is a multi-functional space which includes a café, car parking, sports pitches and courts and adjacent semi-natural areas that are accessible to the public. Improvements to enhance other activities would benefit local residents and visitors. Changing facilities would support existing use of the site.

South Lowestoft Equipped play space recommendations

Comment [SB1]: Difficult in that some are town council and others are WDC. Stoven Close is very tired looking, could it be mentioned?

Comment [N2]: Stoven is one of those that should already have had work started on it!

Brooke Peninsula

The Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood will have a new multi-functional play area provided as part of the new development on the Brooke Peninsular. This will help address an existing shortfall and provide facilities for new residents. To benefit existing residents in Whitton (south of the proposed development) good access to the site should be provided.

Kensington Gardens

The provision of play equipment in this park would be positive for the local community and enhance the park and its Destination and Green Flag status possibilities.

Kirkley, Pakefield and Whitton

The central area between Rosedale Park and Britten Road has no play provision. Play equipment in these spaces should be of higher quality and offer a variety of activities for different age groups to enhance their value. With limited scope to create new play spaces their improvement would help offset the existing shortfall.

Pakefield Green

The only play space located in Pakefield in the vicinity of the neighbourhood centre. There is a significant deficit of provision to the north of the site in Kirkley. Nightingale Road has a play space but being located adjacent to the beach has a limited catchment area. Improving play provision and the landscaping character of Pakefield Green should be considered to increase value for local residents and improve the street scene.

Tides Reach

This play area provides limited facilities for residents and visitors. Located on the South Lowestoft Esplanade, new or additional equipment would improve access to play facilities and complement other recreational facilities nearby including cafes, existing amenity space and the beach.

Ownership of Play Areas

Not all play areas have been transferred from Waveney District Council to the town council, where Waveney has retained the play areas the town council should press to ensure that the District follows through on the proposals outlined in their version of this assessment..

Allotments

Allotments improve the well-being and quality of life of communities by providing a cheap source of good food, healthy outdoor exercise and social interaction, and enhance the biodiversity and green infrastructure in an area.

They can benefit all groups, from those on limited income, to those who are financially secure but take pleasure in growing their own food. By providing economic, social and environmental benefits, allotments contribute towards the three core principles of sustainable development. Allotments play an important role in providing areas of green space within urban environments.

The purpose of this assessment is to identify existing provision of allotments within the District and areas where there is a shortfall to meet current and future demand.

Existing recommended standards

Amount of provision

The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners recommend a quantitative standard of 20 plots per 1000 households (approximately 20 plots per 2200 people). The size of an allotment plot is 250 square metres (0.025ha). This standard is equivalent to 0.23ha of allotments per 1000 people.

Waveney's Allotments, Cemeteries and Churchyards Needs Assessment (2007) found that demand for allotments in the District was high and in some areas there

was a shortfall. To reflect this high demand a standard of 0.3ha of allotments per 1000 was recommended (12 plots per 1000 people).

Catchment area (accessibility)

The previous allotments assessment was completed in 2007. This included a public consultation and household survey. The findings showed the preferred mode of transport by users (and potential users) was by walking and that a travel time of 15 minutes was appropriate (equivalent to 1000m).

Legal requirements to provide allotments

Local Authority

The Council has a legal requirement to provide sufficient allotments where there is an identified need (Small Holdings and Allotments Act, 1908). There is no minimum legal standard of provision.

Town and Parish Councils

If there is a Town or Parish Council in a particular area the responsibility for allotments within the boundaries of that Town or Parish lies with them. The District Council has no powers to act in any manner over allotments in these areas (Local Government Act, 1972).

Quantity and accessibility

The amount of existing allotment provision has been identified through consultation with Local Allotment Associations and Town and Parish Councils. The total amount of allotments provided in each sub area is set out in Table 7.1. This has provided the baseline data to which supply, demand and provision relative to the recommended standard of 0.3ha per 1000 people can be assessed.

Quantity of allotment provision in Waveney				
Sub Area	Population	Allotments (ha)	Area of allotments per 1000 people (ha)	People per hectare of allotments
North Lowestoft	36,089	9.09	0.25	3,970
South Lowestoft	34,362	4.09	0.12	8,401
District	115,254	34.24	0.30	3,366

Population source: 2011 Census

An accessibility standard of 1000m (15 minutes walking distance) provides a realistic travel time/distance threshold based on local needs. Applying this threshold to the whole of the District can highlight areas of deficiency, as well as ensuring that any new allotment provision is placed in priority areas that are outside the recommended local accessibility catchment range. This is considered to be an appropriate catchment area to assess how well an area is provided for in terms of its spatial coverage.

To represent the catchment area of an allotment appropriately, the catchments are proportional to the number of allotments on the site. For example, the allotment site along Tom Crisp Way has 48 allotments, the catchment area is 750m. The site along Blackheath Road has 5 allotments but the catchment area is 375m. This approach is considered to provide a better reflection of how allotments meet the needs of the community.

Quantity of allotment provision in the town

The largest amount of allotment land is provided in North Lowestoft and is similar to the amount recommended by the National Association of Allotments and Leisure Gardeners but below the locally recommended standard. In contrast, there are significant shortfalls in South Lowestoft where provision is well below the District average. Waveney has passed a deficit of allotment provision onto Lowestoft Town Council. Indeed, the only other area of the district with a deficit is Bungay and that is below the level in North Lowestoft. The largest deficits of allotments provision are in North and South Lowestoft and Bungay. Areas with inadequate provision tend to be the areas with the largest waiting list (South Lowestoft).

Existing provision of allotments compared to locally recommended standard			
Sub Area	Area of allotments (ha)	Area of allotments required to meet recommended standard of 0.3ha per 1000 people (ha)	Allotment provision relative to recommended standard (ha)
North Lowestoft	9.09	10.83	-1.74
South Lowestoft	4.09	10.31	-6.22
District	34.24	34.58	-0.34

Quantity and accessibility of allotments in the North Lowestoft area

The total amount of land use for allotments in North Lowestoft (including Corton, Oulton and Oulton Broad) is 9.09ha spread over 10 sites. Compared to the recommended standard there is an existing shortfall of 1.67ha (equivalent to approximately 67 plots). There is believed to be a waiting list in North Lowestoft, however, the extent of this is uncertain.

Allotments sites are reasonably distributed through the North Lowestoft area providing access for much of the town (who have an allotment plot). Accessibility shortfalls are present in the areas North Lowestoft.

Quantity and accessibility of allotments in the South Lowestoft area

There are 4.09ha of allotments provided in South Lowestoft (including Carlton Colville and Oulton Broad) spread over 9 sites. The quantitative shortfall of allotment provision is by far the most significant across Waveney with a deficit of 6.30ha (equivalent to approximately 250 plots). As of July 2014, the waiting list in Lowestoft (north and south inclusive) was over 120 people with latent demand likely to be higher with the waiting list being so extensive.

Allotments sites are provided primarily in the east and south of the area creating a significant accessibility deficit west of Tom Crisp Way through the wards of Carlton and Whitton (Figure 7.11).

Allotment recommendations

A sub-committee of the town council's Implementation Committee should look at all aspects of our provision of Allotments.

North Lowestoft Allotments recommendations (Waveney recommendations)

Monckton Avenue

Increasing demand for allotment plots and a significant deficit of open space used for allotments. Bring forward existing allotment allocations as part of new development at Monckton Avenue Nursery.

South Lowestoft Allotments recommendations (Waveney recommendations)

Britten Road (Kirkley)

Significant shortfall of allotments. Potential to use a section of the Britten Road open space (northwest part of the site) for allotments subject to pedestrian access along a paved path but ensuring no vehicle access being allowed (this would encroach onto the existing open space and further reduce the width to the open space which has been eroded over time and it would contribute negatively to the character of the site). Use of this part of the site would increase the presence of people and reduce the negative visual impact of the fencing along the boundary of the site. The area has an existing deficiency of open space therefore potential changes should be considered in the context of how the space is used and how this might impact on open space provision in the surrounding area.

South Lowestoft (General)

Significant shortfall of allotments to meet demand (waiting list of over 120 people (July 2014) which is equivalent to approximately 3 hectares). Quantitatively there is an allotment land deficit of nearly 6ha. Explore the potential to deliver allotments as an alternative open space use on amenity green spaces which are considered to be of low quality and offer low value in their current form and there is minimal scope to improve the spaces. Allocate land for allotments as part of a review of the Local Plan.

Cemeteries and churchyards

Churchyards are encompassed within the walled boundary of a church and cemeteries are burial grounds outside the confines of a church. The primary purpose of this type of open space is for burial and quiet contemplation but also for the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.

Cemeteries and churchyards can provide open space and wildlife habitats as part of the green infrastructure network. In urban areas their role as an amenity space can supplement other open spaces in the area and provide areas of peace and quiet away from the nearby urban environment. In areas of rural character cemeteries often represent a minor resource in terms of open space but can still prove to be important areas for biodiversity and wildlife habitats.

Cemeteries and churchyards are important historical assets and have additional value placed upon them by families of the deceased. Cemeteries often make an important contribution to the local history and townscape of an area.

There are four cemetery sites and 5 churchyards in Lowestoft. The previous assessment of cemeteries and churchyards included a household survey. The survey highlighted that cleanliness, soft landscaping features and the provision of seating and toilets were of importance to respondents. Negative issues identified by respondents included anti-social behaviour, vandalism and dog-fouling, however, these concerns were not considered to be major.

The 2007 assessment included a survey of site quality. The quality of sites was generally high and all sites are accessible to the public as amenity space. There has been minimal change since this was completed.

Cemeteries

Belle Vue Park (Lowestoft) - Royal Navy Patrol Service only
Gunton Woodland Burial Site
Kirkley Cemetery
Lowestoft Cemetery

Churchyards

St Peter's Church (Gunton, North Lowestoft)
St Margaret's Church (Harbour, North Lowestoft)
St Peter's Church & St Johns Church (Kirkley, South Lowestoft)
All Saints & St Margaret's Church (Pakefield, South Lowestoft)
St Nicholas' Church (Pakefield, South Lowestoft)

Standard of provision

There are no quantity standards, quality standards or accessibility standards set for cemeteries and churchyards within Waveney. In terms of open space provision, while they provide amenity value, they have not been included in the calculation relating to quantitative open space provision. This is not to say these considerations are not important, but rather each site is managed on an individual basis dependent on its surrounding land use and context.

The need to provide burial land in the future has been addressed through land either being allocated for cemetery use or protected as open space adjacent to an existing cemetery (Kirkley Cemetery). A new burial site adjacent to Gunton Woodland has been enhanced through planting and will provide benefits for both the community and wildlife.

Cemeteries and churchyards recommendations

General

Apart from Belle Vue, no cemeteries or churchyards have been transferred to Lowestoft Town Council. Should this happen in the future the Council would consider approaches to management of cemeteries that can provide public amenity and encourage biodiversity.

Green corridors

This assessment aims to identify green corridors that provide habitat connections and movement routes through the urban environment and where these are linked to their wider surroundings.

Landscaping, tree and shrub planting and habitats such as woodlands, wetlands, heathland and grassland can provide aesthetic benefits, encourage healthy living and link fragmented sites of biodiversity. Identifying existing locations of habitats and how they relate to existing open spaces in and around the built environment is important to understanding the integrity of the green infrastructure network.

Different elements of green corridors that have been considered are:

- Biodiversity corridors
Areas of ecological importance that provide habitat links with an urban area (may or may not be publicly accessible).
- Trees, shrubs and hedges
Areas with continuous tree/shrub canopy and hedgerows that provide habitat for wildlife (includes areas in the open countryside and areas within the built-up area including back gardens).
- Greenways
Off road routes that connect people and wildlife to open spaces and other destinations and are traffic-free routes for shared use.

To identify potential routes for greenway development in the future or enhancing existing green routes there is a need to understand existing open space provision in terms of location, the role it has in the community and how development in the future may impact upon an area. Incorporating biodiversity corridors, greenways and green routes into development proposals can enhance the quality of a proposal, reduce the impact on the local area, improve habitat connections for biodiversity and create quality links between new and existing development and the countryside.

Ecological corridors in Lowestoft

Ecological corridors are an important part of the green infrastructure network in Lowestoft and the wider region. Some areas are publicly accessible while others are not, however, in the wider environment it is important to protect areas of ecological importance where so much has been changed and managed over time.

Across the town and District ecological corridors are important in both the strategic and local context. The Waveney Valley, Blyth Valley and sites of high significance along the coast are protected for their wildlife and habitat value. Ecological corridors connecting these areas are important to enable wildlife species to move between habitats. Within settlements areas of natural and semi-natural character, public open spaces and private gardens all contribute towards green infrastructure and where these areas are contiguous or in close proximity to each other they can create green ecological corridors.

Within built up areas public rights of way and cycle routes provide an opportunity to create attractive travel routes for recreational use and commuting. Greenways provide an opportunity to encourage sustainable transport and improve access to semi-natural areas and locations with high biodiversity value. They also improve the public realm and enhance the wider ecological network.

Provision and distribution of green corridors in the North Lowestoft area

North Lowestoft has a significant number of open spaces spread throughout the urban area. A significant number of these are relatively isolated, however, there are several important corridors for wildlife and people to use. Along the coast stretching from Corton to the Net Drying area on Whapload Road are a series of open spaces providing amenity use and habitats for wildlife. Corton Woods, Gunton Cliffs and Gunton Warren combine to provide a diverse range of habitats including woodland, scrub, dunes and water with much of the area having been designated for its ecology to ensure it is protected. These sites link into the Denes and the Net Drying area along the waterfront and into Sparrow's Nest Park, Belle Vue Park and Arnold's Bequest. These areas provide a network of open spaces for public amenity use and create a network of habitats to support wildlife.

Extending north from Belle Vue Park is Yarmouth Road. Parts of this busy road are lined with trees. In Gunton, Yarmouth Road connects into Foxburrow Wood and the large open space north of Gainsborough Drive. Extending south east from Yarmouth

Road (near Belle Vue Park) is the Great Eastern Linear Park. A former railway line, this is the only significant greenway in North Lowestoft providing a high-quality environment for pedestrians, cyclists and wildlife. The greenway links several open spaces and several schools within the residential area. At the southern end of the Great Eastern Linear Park are Lowestoft Cemetery and Normanston Park which contain an array of open space typologies including a semi-natural area. Adjacent to Normanston Park is Leathes Ham, a Local Nature Reserve. This network of green spaces is important for the movement of people and also has the added benefit for wildlife of being connected to Lake Lothing and the habitat this provides. The Suffolk Wildlife Trust Biodiversity Audits (2007) identified wildlife corridors in North and South Lowestoft.

From Normanston Park a green route is provided along Peto Way from Normanston Drive (south) to Bentley Drive (north). Currently the vegetation cover is not yet fully established which limits its value for wildlife but this will improve over time. Despite this the route provides openness in the built-up area and is an attractive place for pedestrians and cyclists who use the shared use paths to access the areas between the northern reaches of Lowestoft and the area closer to Lake Lothing and the town centre. The attractiveness of the green route encourages people to be more active, particularly by connecting schools in the north and encouraging children to participate in physical activity at a young age. The proposed pedestrian/cycle crossing from the Brooke Peninsula on the south side of Lake Lothing to Normanston Park will further increase the value of the green infrastructure in central Lowestoft and increase access to community facilities. The quality of this route and its connections should be protected to ensure its value is retained in the future. The railway line in Lowestoft has minimal value for biodiversity in the centre of town as it is adjacent to the port area and vegetation is limited.

North Lowestoft is expected to support a significant amount of the urban growth during the current plan period. Several housing developments are anticipated to come forward in the next few years. Further development in the vicinity of Oulton Road and Peto Way will increase the value of the Peto Way green route for local residents.

In some areas of North Lowestoft where the urban boundary meets the open countryside the area is poorly integrated creating an environment where the built-up area does not relate to its surroundings. Benefit for residents, visitors and wildlife is limited if not poor and future proposals should avoid this approach.

Comment [SB3]: Pathways care farm north of Bentley Drive, is this in Lowestoft or Corton? It has a large run off pond with hide.

Comment [N4]: I've checked and it's in Oulton according to the boundary on our website.

Provision and distribution of green corridors in the South Lowestoft area

The green infrastructure in South Lowestoft is more dispersed than North Lowestoft with distinct networks of green spaces that are less easily identifiable. The primary green route for the movement of people is along Tom Crisp Way and Castleton Avenue (Figure 9.7). The route is a main traffic corridor out of South Lowestoft, however, the quality of the route for pedestrians, cyclists and wildlife is high. The route is an example of the incorporation of sustainable drainage schemes that have

been delivered to support the development, provide visual amenity to enhance the environment and create wetland habitats.

Along the length of Tom Crisp Way are several large open spaces making the greenery along the road a key connection between habitats. At the northern end is Kirkley Fen Park which supports a variety of recreational activities and grassland and wetland habitats. Heading south Pakefield Park provides a quality wooded semi-natural habitat with pedestrian and cycle access through it. Pakefield Park connects into the greenway behind Silverwood Close. This greenway is an attractive environment that enhances the area for people and wildlife and complements Pakefield Park. However, there are no greenways or green routes extending east or west from this space to encourage greater use of the space and improve connectivity between destinations such as the beach. A similar but shorter greenway is located north of Pakefield Park behind Green Drive.

The area around The Avenue provides a quality visual environment with established trees complemented by good canopy coverage in back gardens. The Avenue extends north from London Road South to the Tom Crisp Way. Continuing north, Kirkley Run will be a key street to access the proposed open space, play area and County Wildlife Site in the Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood. Public realm improvements to Kirkley Run would enhance the green infrastructure network and its value to the community by improving connectivity within the urban area.

Extending west from Tom Crisp Way the green route continues along Castleton Avenue and connects Carlton Meadow Park to the surrounding area. This park has a variety of habitats including wetland and supports recreational activities for all age groups. Carlton Meadow Park acts to connect the population living south of Lowestoft Road to the pedestrian and cycle network and the residential area north of Castleton Avenue via Hollow Lane and Grove Road. This open space is a good distance from both the Bloodmoor Community Centre open space to the south and the Carlton Colville Community Centre to the south west. The value of the Hollow Lane as a green route is significantly inhibited by a lack of pedestrian and cycle connection to the existing network along Beccles Road. The shared use path continues from the end of Castleton Avenue, however, its abrupt break along Beccles Road opposite Cabin Close is a gap in the transport network and detrimental to people using connections in the wider green infrastructure network.

At the southern end of Tom Crisp Way is the A12 heading towards the Tower Road roundabout. This green route provides visual amenity with some green space for wildlife but does not provide any quality public access or an attractive environment to encourage use as a pedestrian movement corridor. However, this route does provide connectivity to the residential area of Long Road and Rosedale Park. In this sense this connectivity is likely to be of benefit to wildlife.

The Tom Crisp Way and Castleton Avenue corridor connects green spaces through the north-south spine of South Lowestoft but the green spaces along the coast provide the greatest value for recreational amenity. A network of open spaces extends from the mouth of Lake Lothing all along the built-up area and south through the Pakefield Cliffs and into Kessingland. The beach environment provides a natural

habitat for wildlife and recreational use by residents and visitors. The area is a key connection between the area south of Pakefield and central Lowestoft and the town centre. Protecting facilities in the area such as play spaces and amenity green spaces from threats such as the sea and encroachment are essential to maintain this area as an attractive movement corridor and destination for recreational use. This is particularly important for areas such as Pakefield and Kirkley where there is a shortfall of open space and connected network of green corridors.

The southern boundary of South Lowestoft is reasonably well integrated in some areas such as Chapel Road and the open space in the vicinity of Carlton Hall in the west. Nearby is the open space of Aveling Way which provides a connection between residential areas and some habitat for wildlife but limited ancillary facilities create a space that is attractive and provides a view for dwellings fronting onto the space but has limited value for the community. Improving facilities on the site that would improve the quality and value of the site would enhance its value in the wider green infrastructure network.

The open space extending south from the Bloodmoor Community Centre provides a soft edge to the more recent development in Carlton Colville. Currently the southern part of the site offers limited value for wildlife as the trees are still small but these should improve with the passage of time. For amenity use the site provides an area for walking but does not have any facilities or notable landscaping that would encourage people to use the space. Extending north from this space is a short green corridor that connects to Airedale. This greenway provides an attractive environment with connections for pedestrians and cyclists. Improvements to the amenity space at the southern end would encourage greater use of the greenway and enhance its value to the community.

The only significant development expected in the near future is at the South Lowestoft Industrial Estate. Consideration should be given to how the urban edge integrates into the open countryside to the south and if there is potential to connect into the green infrastructure network to the west of the site. If other development comes forward in the south it is important that connectivity is established to the existing green routes connecting to Airedale if feasible.

Green corridor recommendations

North Lowestoft Green corridor recommendations

Corton and the East of England Park

Connections and uses of public green spaces along the coast between Corton and Lowestoft Ness should consider wildlife value alongside value to the public.

Great Eastern Linear Park

Protect the quality of the park and improve connections to adjacent residential areas.

Northern area

Proposed developments in the north of the town should provide quality connections to link into the Millennium Way/Peto Way green route if feasible.

Peto Way

Protect the green route extending along Peto Way to retain openness and the quality of the connection for pedestrians, cyclists and wildlife. This will enhance the visual amenity of the route and its character.

South Lowestoft Green corridor recommendations

Kirkley Run

Enhance the public realm along Kirkley Run to improve connections to the Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood network of open space and ancillary facilities.

Glossary of terms

Accessibility	Ease with which people can travel to a destination.
Allotment	Small plot of land used for growing fruit and vegetables. These are usually grouped together to form allotment gardens.
Amenity green space	Green space that provides an area for general public use and visually enhances the local environment.
Ancient woodlands	Woodlands that have existed since 1600 or before, though some of these have been felled and replanted since that time.
Catchment area	Area from which a service or facility attracts visitors.
Deprivation	Shortfall or abundance of financial and social resources to achieve economic wellbeing.
Destination parks	Large parks supporting a range of uses which attract residents and visitors from a large catchment area.
Ecological networks	Consist of several different habitats and sites that host a range of different plants and animals creating interlinked habitats and enabling wildlife to move between sites.
Green route	A road route lined with trees to create a landscaped connection for people and wildlife.

Greenway	Traffic free route providing wildlife habitat and supporting movement of non-vehicular traffic such as pedestrians, cyclists and horse riding.
Local Area for Play (LAP)	A small play space with limited facilities and is aimed at children of up to six years of age.
Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)	These spaces provide a range of different facilities and are aimed at children of up to eight years of age.
Local parks	Smaller parks supporting a limited range of facilities for people in the surrounding area.
Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)	This is an artificial sports field that is marked out for a range of different sports.
Multi-Functional open space	Any space that is able to support more than one type of use.
Natural green space	An area of natural open space including grassland and vegetation.
Neighbourhood Equipped Play Area (NEAP)	This is a larger play space with a wide range of facilities and is intended for use by children of up to 14 years of age.
Parks and gardens	Landscaped public spaces, usually in urban areas, designed for a variety of uses.
Passive amenity green space	Amenity green space that is designed or maintained in such a way that it does not encourage activities to take place there.
Play Spaces	Spaces that are primarily used for the purposes of play: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipped play space - Open space with items of play equipment. • Unequipped Play Space - Open space with elements designed into the landscape to facilitate play.
Primary Function	The main use of an open space.
Public realm	Any space or place that is accessible to the public.
Satellite parks	Small parks that have a limited range of facilities and cater for people in the surrounding area. Mostly used by children and the elderly and are particularly useful in built up areas.

Secondary function	Additional use of open space.
Semi natural green space	Area of natural open space that has been modified by human intervention.
Stepping stones	Stepping stones act as small patches of land that different species can use as they move between larger blocks of habitat. They are particularly useful for birds, insects and other airborne creatures.
Strategic river corridor	River that acts as a corridor of movement for wildlife (and sometimes people).
Wildlife corridors	Parts of the ecological network that serve as links between sites along which birds and animals can move.