



CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL

DRAFT OPEN SPACE STRATEGY (2022)

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

Glossary

CCC	Canterbury City Council
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DLUHC	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
DPD	Development Plan Document
FIT	Fields in Trust
FOG	Friends of Group
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
KKP	Knight, Kavanagh and Page
LDF	Local Development Framework
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
MUGA	Multi-use Games Area (an enclosed area with a hard surface for variety of informal play)
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NSALG	National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners
ONS	Office of National Statistics
OSNA	Open Space Needs Assessment
PPG	Planning Practice Guidance
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
SOA	Super Output Areas
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the draft Open Space Strategy for Canterbury City Council (CCC). It provides a summary to the findings of the research, site assessments, data analysis and GIS mapping undertaken as part of the Open Space Assessment.

The Strategy itself helps to inform direction on the future provision of accessible, high quality, sustainable provision of open spaces across Canterbury district. It includes a series of aims and objectives to inform the priorities for open space provision in order to help address current and future needs.

A detailed Action Plan will be developed following the Regulation 18 consultation and review of the aims and objectives, and this will become an Appendix Five to this document.

Public open space is defined in the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) as being “any land laid out as a public garden, or used for the purposes of public recreation, or land which is a disused burial ground”.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Specific needs and quantitative and qualitative deficiencies and surpluses in local areas should also be identified. This information should be used to inform what provision is required in an area.

The Strategy is therefore a key supporting document to the Local Plan.

Open spaces contribute to the health, well-being, cultural heritage, landscape, education, climate change mitigation, biodiversity and movement for people and wildlife. It is therefore vital to know and understand what provision currently exists and what the priorities and requirements are for the future.

PART 2: CONTEXT REVIEW

It is important to recognise national and local strategies and documents to help understand the need, challenges, and benefits of open space provision.

2.1 Local

Canterbury City Council Corporate Plan (2021 - 2024)

Sets out the key priorities for the Council to reflect where it can make the biggest difference to people's everyday lives. The main priorities are to:

- ◀ Support the district's economy to recover then grow
- ◀ Deliver a better social housing service for our tenants
- ◀ Deliver better waste collection services for all residents
- ◀ Using our enforcement powers to protect the district

It recognises the role and function of supporting documents such as the Local Plan and Climate Change Action Plan in helping to achieve the Council's priorities. It also acknowledges the added challenges brought by the pandemic.

Relating to open spaces, it highlights that one of the Council's roles is in *providing leadership and fighting for the district*. This includes

- ◀ Being committed to the council achieving its carbon neutral ambitions by 2030 with our efforts being economically viable and timed to get best value for our residents.
- ◀ Recognise new housing developments need real open space that is close by to protect the health and wellbeing of residents. The Council should, within its powers, protect these spaces and work in partnership to enhance and maintain them.

Canterbury District Local Plan (adopted July 2017)

This plan sets out the vision for the area from 2011-2031. It provides certainty for local people, developers and others about planning decisions for the area. It aims to:

- ◀ Create well-designed new communities, with good access to jobs and services.
- ◀ Make sure there is enough housing, and different types of housing, to meet the needs of local people and support new job creation.
- ◀ Protect sensitive landscape and wildlife areas, and other key environmental assets such as the World Heritage Site, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Conservation Areas.
- ◀ Make certain that new infrastructure, such as transport, schools and health facilities, are provided in parallel with development.
- ◀ Protect and strengthen town and village centres.
- ◀ Support the growth of the universities and colleges.
- ◀ Support development of new and improved cultural and leisure facilities.

The Council has evidence which indicates that there is a need to grow and broaden the economy and provide housing to meet local needs and to support the local economy.

Plan objectives

- ◀ Strengthen and broaden the local economy.
- ◀ Provide sufficient housing to meet local housing need and support economic growth.
- ◀ Protect the built and natural environment.
- ◀ Develop sustainable communities and seek to ensure that adequate community facilities are provided.

Draft Open Space Strategy (2014-2020)

The Draft Open Space Strategy is a supporting document of, and defers to, the Local Plan. It sets out how Canterbury will protect and enhance open space in the district.

Its vision is 'To develop an interconnected network of diverse, high quality open spaces which meet the needs of local people and make a significant contribution to raising the quality of life for all residents and visitors to the Canterbury district'. The aim is to 'Aspire to protect and enhance the existing quality of public open space and promote its usage'.

Canterbury District Green Infrastructure Strategy (2018-2031)

The Green Infrastructure Strategy sits alongside and supports the delivery of both CCC's adopted Local Plan 2017 and Corporate Plan, both of which recognise the importance of environmental sustainability and the protection of Canterbury district's outstanding natural assets. It brings together the objectives and actions of several CCC strategies, policy documents and evidence reports, including the Transport Strategy, the Riverside Strategy, the Open Spaces Strategy and the Landscape and Biodiversity Appraisal plus others.

Climate Change Action Plan (2020 - 2030)

Since declaring a climate emergency in 2019, CCC has been working towards the achievement of net zero greenhouse gas emissions, building resilience to the risks of climate changes, and championing economic activity that delivers climate actions.

The action plan focuses on achieving tangible actions aligned with proven examples. It aims to ensure that CCC and the district make a positive contribution to the global effort. This includes potential projects that will best help reduce emissions across the district such as looking at reducing emissions relating to corporate buildings and transport.

As part of its multifunctional role, open space has the ability in helping to tackle wider social issues such as climate change.

Some open spaces may have the potential to accommodate greater resilience measures to climate change at a local level. This could include simple measures such as more tree planting and wildflower meadow creation to potentially help reduce CO2 levels, provide flood reduction, mitigate impacts of urban heat island effects, and poor air quality.

2.2 National

National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF sets out the planning policies for England. It details how these are expected to be applied to the planning system and provides a framework to produce distinct local and neighbourhood plans, reflecting the needs and priorities of local communities.

It states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It establishes that the planning system needs to focus on three themes of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. A presumption in favour of sustainable development is a key aspect for any plan-making and decision-taking processes. In relation to plan-making the NPPF sets out that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs.

Paragraph 98 of the NPPF establishes that access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for health and well-being. It states that planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficiencies and surpluses in local areas should also be identified. This information should be used to inform what provision is required in an area.

As a prerequisite paragraph 99 of the NPPF states existing open space, sports and recreation sites, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- ◀ An assessment has been undertaken, which has clearly shown the site to be surplus to requirements; or
- ◀ The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- ◀ The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

Paragraph 148 states the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

National Planning Practice Guidance, (MHCLG)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) is a web-based resource which brings together planning guidance on various topics into one place. It was launched in March 2014 and adds further context to the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF). It is intended that the two documents should be read together.

The guidance determines that open space should be taken into account in planning for new development and considering proposals that may affect existing open space. It is for local planning authorities to assess the need for open space and opportunities for new provision in their areas. In carrying out this work, they should have regard to the duty to cooperate where open space serves a wider area.

National Design Guide

This Design Guide sets out the characteristics of well-designed places as well as good design practices. It is part of the Government's collection of planning practice guidance.

Nature and open spaces are recognised as critical contributors of well-designed places including the quality of places and people's quality of life. Attractive open space that are easy to access, with activities for all to enjoy including play, food production, recreation and sport, encourage physical activity and promote health, well-being and social inclusion.

Paragraphs 93 and 94 state open spaces should be designed to be high quality, robust and adaptable over time so they remain fit for purpose and are managed and maintained for continual use. This includes:

- ◀ A range of sizes and locations
- ◀ A variety of natural and designed landscapes for everyone, with different functions to suit a diverse range of needs
- ◀ Opportunities for formal and informal play, exercise and rest that are accessible to all and with no segregation
- ◀ Well-integrated drainage, ecology, shading, recreation and food production that achieve a biodiversity net gain as required by the 25 year Environment Plan
- ◀ Well-considered maintenance and management regimes based on an understanding of the costs for occupants or users.

Building for a Healthy Life

A design code to help improve the design of new and growing neighbourhoods. It is intended to help focus the thoughts, discussions and efforts on the things that matter most when creating good places to live. Open space being recognised as a key component. The guide uses a 'traffic light' system to illustrate examples of good practice (green light) and poor practice (red light). Some of the good practice relevant to open space includes:

- ◀ Biodiversity net gain
- ◀ Movement and feeding corridors for wildlife
- ◀ Plans that identify and are specific about the character of new spaces, such as parks, woodland, allotments, wildflower meadows rather than public open space
- ◀ Create Park Run ready routes on larger developments and other ways to encourage physical activity and social interaction
- ◀ Capturing and managing water creatively and close to where it falls using features (e.g. rain gardens, permeable surfaces); allowing people to connect with water
- ◀ Create a habitat network providing residents with opportunities to interact with nature on a day to day basis.
- ◀ Provide natural surveillance opportunities
- ◀ Connected and accessible network of public open spaces with paths and other routes into and through
- ◀ Species rich grasslands
- ◀ Well considered management arrangements whether public or privately managed.

Public Health England

In October 2014 Public Health England (PHE) produced a plan to tackle low activity levels across the country. Along with making the case for physical activity, the plan identifies four areas where measures need to be taken at a national and local level:

- ◀ Active society: creating a social movement. Shifting social norms so that physical activity becomes a routine part of daily life.
- ◀ Moving professionals: activating networks of expertise. Making every contact with the health sector count to push the 'active' message and to deliver the message through other sectors including education, sports and leisure, transport and planning.
- ◀ Active environments: creating the right spaces. Making available and accessible appropriate environments that encourage people to be active every day.
- ◀ Moving at scale: scaling up interventions that make us active. Maximising existing assets that enable communities to be active.

Summary of context

The NPPF states Local Plans should reflect needs and priorities within a local community and be based on robust and current assessments of open spaces. Engaging residents to take up and retain a minimum or better level of physical literacy* and activity is a high priority for national government. For many people, open space/recreational activities have a key role to play in facilitating physical activity. Similarly, open space has an important role in many areas in contributing to climate change resilience. Therefore, ensuring that open space creates an active, climate resilient environment with suitable opportunities and good accessibility is important.

* Physical literacy is the motivation, confidence, physical competence and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities

PART 3: SUMMARY OF OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

The Open Space Assessment details what open space provision exists, its distribution and overall quality. It analyses provision based on quantity, quality, and accessibility.

3.1 Overview

The Canterbury Open Space Assessment identifies 584 open space sites across the area, an equivalent to 4,173 hectares. The largest contributor to provision is natural and semi natural (3,878 hectares). The totals include sites owned and managed by other parties and which are not solely owned by CCC. Consequently, CCC are not in control of the quality and/or future actions for all sites.

Table 3.1: Overview of all open space provision

Open space typology	Number of sites	Total amount (hectares)*
Allotments	23	27
Amenity greenspace	262	132
Cemeteries/churchyards	48	45
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	89	3,878
Outdoor sports	25	60
Park and gardens	14	18
Provision for children & young people	123	13
Total	584	4,173

3.2 Quality and value

In accordance with best practice, certain types of open space have been assessed in terms of quality.

There is a mixed quality of open space, reflected in over half (56%) of sites scoring low quality. Proportionally there are more play provision and amenity greenspace sites to rate low for quality. For amenity, this is reflective of the range of sites within the typology.

Table 3.2.1: Quality ratings for assessed sites

Analysis area	No. of sites	
	Low	High
Amenity greenspace	22	17
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	19	17
Park and gardens	5	9
Provision for children & young people	72	49
Total	118	92

Sites rating lower for quality often reflect a lack of ancillary features and facilities (e.g. seating, signage etc.) or access concerns. For play provision, this is often due to concerns with the range and quality of equipment and/or surfaces.

Of the 118 sites to rate below the quality threshold, 24 are noted as being just below the quality threshold. These sites should be reviewed and/or prioritised for possible

* Rounded to the nearest whole number

enhancements to help address quality of provision. This would also shift the balance of sites rating above or below the threshold in the favour of more sites rating higher.

Value is an assessment of the potential use of a site based on its open space type. Over half of assessed sites (58%) rate as high for value, reflecting the role and importance of open space provision to local communities and environments.

Table 3.2.2: Value ratings for assessed sites

Analysis area	No. of sites	
	Low	High
Amenity greenspace	14	27
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	5	31
Park and gardens	1	13
Provision for children & young people	69	52
Total	89	123

Sites rating below the value thresholds often reflect a general lack of offer or potential use (i.e. no features, difficult to access). For play provision, this is often due to a limited range of equipment at sites.

Of the 24 sites highlighted earlier as being just below the quality threshold, 10 sites are also noted as being below the value threshold. These sites should be reviewed and/or prioritised for possible enhancements to help further strengthen the benefits of provision

A high value site is likely to be one considered to be well used by the local community, well maintained (with a balance for conservation), providing a safe environment and range of features, for example, good quality play equipment and landscaping. Sites that provide for a cross section of users and have a multi-functional use are likely to be considered higher value than those offering limited functions and viewed as unattractive.

3.3 Accessibility

Catchment mapping is used to help identify areas potentially not being served by open space provision. They can also be used to help inform where future opportunities for provision could be located.

Gaps in different open space types are highlighted across the area. However, where a gap in one form of provision exists (e.g. for parks) then a site recognised as a different type of open space (e.g. amenity) is often present.

It is therefore important the quality of such sites are to a sufficient level as in some instances they may help to serve as an alternative/secondary role within the identified gap (in the absence of any new provision being able to be provided).

Sites helping to serve such gaps are set out within the action plan. It is important that any provision rated as low quality are recognised as a priority for enhancement.

3.4 Quantity

Quantity is measured using a quantity standard (i.e. the amount of provision in hectares per 1,000 population). This can be used to identify areas of shortfalls and to help with determining future requirements due to growth.

All analysis areas are observed as having shortfalls in some form of open space. However, areas such as Upper Hardres, Thanington, Ickham and Well, Hersden, Chartham and Bekesbourne-with-Patrixbourne are highlighted as having shortfalls across all open space types. To some extent this may be expected given the lower population density of such areas.

Areas with greater population density such as Canterbury and Whitstable are both observed as having shortfalls for all provision types (except for allotments in Canterbury and amenity in Whitstable). Herne Bay is noted as having shortfalls in provision with the exception for parks and gardens.

3.5 Headlines

Canterbury

- Has 223 open space sites equating to a total 236 hectares.
- Of the 56 assessed sites, 33 (59%) are below the quality threshold and 26 (46%) are below the value threshold. Seven sites are highlighted as being just below the quality threshold.
- Gaps in catchment mapping are observed in parks, natural and play provision. Within these gaps, six existing sites of different typologies are noted as potentially helping to serve the areas. Of these, two are rated as lower quality.
- The area has shortfalls in quantity against most typologies with the exception for allotments.

Herne Bay

- Has 65 open space sites equating to a total 99 hectares.
- Of the 27 assessed sites, 12 (44%) are below the quality threshold and 10 (37%) are below the value threshold. Four sites are highlighted as being just below the quality threshold.
- Gaps in catchment mapping are observed in parks, natural, amenity and play provision. Within these gaps, seven existing sites of different typologies are noted as potentially helping to serve the areas. Of these, one is rated as lower quality.
- The area has shortfalls in quantity against most typologies with the exception for parks.

Whitstable

- Has 105 open space sites equating to a total 418 hectares.
- Of the 41 assessed sites, 23 (56%) are below the quality threshold and 20 (49%) are below the value threshold. One site is highlighted as being just below the quality threshold.
- Gaps in catchment mapping are observed in parks and play provision. Within these gaps, eight existing sites of different typologies are noted as potentially helping to serve the areas. Of these, three are rated as lower quality.
- The area has shortfalls in quantity against most typologies with the exception for amenity.

Rural area

- Has 232 open space sites equating to a total 3,459 hectares.
- Of the 90 assessed sites, 53 (59%) are below the quality threshold and 37 (41%) are below the value threshold. 12 sites are highlighted as being just below the quality threshold.
- Given the lower population densities across the area, no significant gaps in catchment mapping are observed. However, it is identified that eight sites potentially help to serve gaps highlighted in the other analysis areas. Of these, two are rated as lower quality.
- Shortfalls in quantity exist in most areas. The areas of Upper Hardes, Thanington, Ickham and Well, Hersden, Chartham and Bekesbourne-with-Patrixbourne are highlighted as having shortfalls across all open space types.

PART 4: VISION AND AIMS

The vision of the Open Space Strategy is:

'To develop an interconnected network of diverse, high quality open spaces which contribute to biodiversity, habitats and the needs of local people to help raise the quality of life for all residents and visitors to the Canterbury district'

To achieve this vision, the following overarching aims are intended to help direct future actions and decisions.

AIM 1

To **protect** the existing supply of open space provision where it is needed to meet current and future needs.

AIM 2

To **enhance** open space provision and facilities through improving quality and management of sites.

AIM 3

To **promote** and **secure** new provision and facilities where current or future demand requires it.

PART 5: OBJECTIVES

The following objectives are provided to work towards the aims of this strategy and to help address the shortfalls and issues identified as part of the study.

5.1 Objectives

Objective 1
Open space provision should be protected in recognition of its contribution to communities. Any potential loss of provision needs to be in line with Policy DS24 of the Local Plan

As per Policy DS 24 (Publicly accessible open space and sports):

1. Proposals for new residential and mixed-use development schemes, will be required to deliver the following quantum of each category of publicly accessible open space provision in accordance with the specified quantity standards.
2. As a minimum, development proposals should make appropriate space available to meet the quantity standards within the site as set out below:
 - a. Developments of 7.5ha or greater will be required to provide all typologies in full within the site;
 - b. Developments of between 3.5ha and 7.4ha will be required to provide all typologies in full within the site, except outdoor sports and allotments;
 - c. Developments of less than 3.4ha and flatted schemes will be expected to provide green corridors and, where appropriate, amenity green space within the site only.

Where the quantity standards are not met in full by open space provision within the site, the council will secure appropriate financial contributions towards qualitative improvements to existing off-site open spaces, and on-going maintenance, to ensure the impact of the development is fully mitigated. The council has prepared an Open Spaces Calculator to help applicants quantify such contributions.

3. Where a development of over 3.5ha is proposed in an area of the district with identified deficiencies in the typologies for parks and gardens, play areas, allotments or outdoors sports, or where the specific characteristics of a development site present a strategic opportunity for provision of one of these typologies, the council will require the applicant to maximise the impact of the open space contribution to the local area and the district by apply flexibility between typologies, while maintaining the overall level of open space provision for the site.
4. The type of outdoor sports pitches must be determined based on the Council's Open Space Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy, or any subsequent updates to these strategies, or identified local need. Applicants should also have full regard to Sports England's Play Pitch Calculator to determine quantity and sub-typology of outdoor sport required.
5. Proposals for development which include provision of new on site open space must ensure that new open spaces meet the specified quality standards below:
 - a. Be designed as part of the green infrastructure network in a locality, contributing to local landscape character, connecting with local routes and green corridors for people and wildlife as well as providing multi-functional benefits such as addressing surface water management priorities;

- b. Play provision is sufficiently diverse to encourage all appropriate ages;
- c. Be fully accessible and incorporate natural and incidental play, to encourage physical activity to improve mental well-being & health inequalities;
- d. Provide a location and shape for the space which allows for meaningful and safe recreation and be sufficiently overlooked by active building frontages while maintaining appropriate distances from residential development;
- e. Be easily found and accessible walking and cycling, and public transport and road where appropriate, including by those with disabilities, with pedestrian crossings on roads where necessary;
- f. Make the entrances accessible for all users, of appropriate size and inviting with a welcoming sign and directions/map where appropriate;
- g. Provide clearly defined boundaries with fences or hedges where needed to ensure safety of users;
- i. Providing signage, seating, cycle furniture, litter bins and lighting, where appropriate, to ensure safety of users without adversely affecting wildlife;
- j. Provide a range of planting, with appropriate mix of predominantly indigenous species, maintained to a good standard;
- k. Promote biodiversity on-site through design, choice of species and management practises, while ensuring that the space's ability to perform as an accessible open space is not compromised; and
 - (i) For developments of over 3.5ha: Provide an Open Space Layout and Design statement, to incorporate ecological management measures for approval by the council; and
 - (ii) Provide a Management Plan with adequate resources identified for on-going management and maintenance.

The council will have regard to these quality standards where it applies off-site financial contributions towards improving existing open space provision.

6. Proposals for development for more than 300 homes will be required, for the total on-site open space provision, to:
- a. Obtain the relevant designation (either Town / Village Green, Fields in Trust or Local Nature Reserve) for the open space from the relevant body; and
 - b. Transfer the freehold ownership of the open space to the council (or to the Parish Council); and
 - c. Establish an endowment fund to cover the on-going management and maintenance of the open space in perpetuity.

7. Proposals for development which include provision of new on-site open space should have regard to the specified accessibility standards in determining the position of new open space provision within the site.

The council will also have regard to these accessibility standards where it applies off-site financial contributions towards improving existing open space provision.

8. Proposals for development which would result in the loss of publicly accessible open space, as defined on the policies map, will only be permitted if:
- a. There would be no material harm to the contribution the open space makes to the visual or recreational amenity of the area, and the council has assessed the open space as making no positive contribution to its overall strategy on open space; or

- b. Where there would be material harm, this would be balanced against demonstrable need for the development in that specific location. Should there be no alternative site available to accommodate the proposed development, any any harm must be offset by the provision of other open space of comparable accessibility, quality, size, character and usability in a suitable location, in addition to any open space requirements of the new development; or
- c. The proposal is for the construction of a new building that is an essential facility for outdoor sport, recreation, play or allotment use or other open space typology uses that does not conflict with the purpose, character or accessibility of the open space; or
- d. The proposal is for a proportionate and essential extension or alteration of an existing building or equipment which does not harm the character of the area; or
- e. The proposal is for the re-use or replacement of existing buildings provided that the proposed uses do not conflict with the purpose, character or accessibility of the open space; and any replacement building is not materially larger; or
- f. The proposal is for the carrying out of engineering or other operations required for public safety.

In addition, proposals for development which would result in the loss, in whole or in part, of sports or recreation facilities must also demonstrate that:

- g. The site has first been considered for other sport, open space, recreation, biodiversity or community uses; and
- h. It has been demonstrated that the playing field is surplus to requirements having regard to the council's Open Space Strategy or Playing Pitch Strategy; or
- i. There is an overriding need for the proposed development which outweighs the loss and the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or,
- j. The development is for a small part of the site; where it has been demonstrated that it will result in enhanced sport and recreational facilities.

9. Proposals for development that would result in the loss of publicly accessible open spaces provided through new developments will be refused.

10. Proposals for new sports and recreation facilities, either as stand-alone facilities or as part of a mixed-use development, will be supported where the proposal meets the requirements of other policies in this plan, and where:

- a. The new provision meets Sports England's criteria for the proposed use and any criteria issues by the relevant National Governing Body; and
- b. Appropriate ancillary facilities are proposed; and
- c. Where other sports facilities are proposed as part of the development, the facilities are co-located where appropriate; and
- d. There is no adverse impact upon living conditions; and
- e. The site is appropriately accessible by walking, cycling and, where appropriate, public transport; and
- f. Buildings are well designed, appropriate in scale and function to the use of the land, and meet the minimum size and quality standards to be usable as the proposed type of sport. This includes ensuring sufficient distance between the boundaries and nearby buildings, new and existing; and

- g. The scheme incorporates measures to improve resilience to the potential impacts of climate change; and
- h. The application is supported by evidence of a management scheme which details the future ownership, management and maintenance of the site.

Objective 2

Look to address low quality and low value sites through exploring opportunities for enhancement. The priority should be those highlighted as providing a key role in terms of access or which could be improved through relatively minor enhancements

There are 118 sites to rate low for quality (of which 80 also rate low for value). Eight of these sites are highlighted as having the potential to help serve gaps identified in accessibility catchment mapping. It is also highlighted that 24 low quality sites rate just below the quality threshold (Appendix 1).

Sites rating lower for quality often reflect a lack of ancillary features and facilities (e.g. seating, signage etc.) or access concerns. For play provision, this is often due to concerns with the range and quality of equipment and/or surfaces.

Objective 3

Ensure new development contributes to the provision of open spaces

Quantitative shortfalls are identified across the area. This will be exacerbated further by future population increases. By 2043 and based on adopted provision standards, Canterbury will require an additional 132 hectares of open space.

For many local authorities, often the best opportunity to try and help address such shortfalls are in instances where new housing growth is planned. It is therefore vital that the CCC provision standards are used to inform the amounts of open space required as part of each future development. In some instances, an offsite contribution may be better suited.

For strategic developments, delivering 300 or more homes, consideration will be given to transferring the freehold ownership of the open space to the council (or Parish Council) and to establishing an endowment fund (or similar financial method) to cover the ongoing management and maintenance of the open space in perpetuity.

The CCC Open Space Calculator should be used to determine the equivalent offsite contributions.

In such instances the creation of new provision and/or offsite contributions may also help to address identified gaps in accessibility catchment mapping. This could either be through the creation of new provision and/or the enhancement of a site's capacity or secondary role (if identified as helping to potentially serve a gap in a provision type).

There is however still a need and desire to provide certain typologies which cannot be created through secondary functions of existing sites (i.e. allotment and parks provision).

Objective 4

Make sure the design of new sites and facilities are in keeping with council expectations

Given the existing shortfalls, competing pressures on future land supply and the scarcity of creating new provision, it is essential that the design and location of open space and play facilities are considered as a priority from the outset in the planning of future developments. Appendix 2 sets out some design considerations.

Any new sites/facilities should be integrated into the development and designed with the objective of contributing optimally to the quality of life of residents. Developments in which open space is 'fitted in' around built elements as a secondary consideration, rarely achieve this objective. Consideration should also be given to the connections between them, ensuring that a network of diverse and stimulating accessible open space binds the development together.

Buffer zones, relevant to recreation, play and youth provision, must be considered from the outset when locating and integrating those facilities. Their primary purpose is to prevent potential disturbance from activities at the facility to residents of adjacent dwellings. They also help ensure safety, for example of children playing, by providing a wide field of surveillance and reducing exposure to fast and heavy traffic. Potential spaces for facilities need to be large enough to accommodate buffer zones.

Objective 5

Maximise contributions to biodiversity net gain and Local Nature Recovery networks
--

Given the national priority to address climate change and the initiatives to regenerate natural greenspace, and relating to Objectives 2 and 3, it is crucial to ensure the Council and its partners work to retain and enhance the natural environment and the services it provides. This may be achieved through appropriate creation or improvement of habitats with potential measure such as encouraging more tree cover and pollinators etc.

Objective 6

Retain the existing number of Green Flag Award sites and explore opportunities to expand
--

There are currently three sites with a Green Flag Award (a national/international recognised quality mark for greenspaces). Opportunities to expand the number of sites and the resources to support this should be encouraged and explored.

Objective 7

Explore options for appropriate sites to receive additional designations
--

Designations are a tool to identify and protect open space of particular importance. Given the significance and role of some sites it may be appropriate to consider such levels of protection. Any designation needs to be consistent with local planning policy and meet the criteria set out within the NPPF.

Objective 8

Continue to support the role of Friends of Groups and encourage the formation of any new groups

It is recognised that the role and involvement of friends of groups significantly contributes to the added quality and value of a site. Continuing to support and enable the work of

such groups should be advocated. Opportunities to strengthen and grow such groups should also be encouraged and explored.

Objective 9

Recognise the role and importance of key strategic sites through ensuring and enhancing their quality and access
--

There are several sites (38 listed in Appendix 3) with a more strategic and/or multi-functional role which serve a wider catchment area. For parks, these are referred to as 'destination' sites and for amenity greenspace these are referred to as 'recreation' sites.

There are several of these sites which are observed as being of a lower quality (10 sites). The priority should be to explore options to enhance the quality and access of these key sites given the important role across the district and to individual analysis areas.

This links to existing or imminent works and projects being undertaken such as, for example, the works at Herne Bay Memorial Park, Cornwallis, and Dane John.

APPENDIX ONE: SITES RATING JUST BELOW QUALITY THRESHOLD

Objective 2 sets out that of the 118 sites to rate low for quality*, 24 are just below the quality threshold. Such sites should be reviewed and explored for opportunities to enhance their quality as they may be relatively simple/low cost to resolve. The table below details for the 24 sites the reasons why a site scores lower.

Id	Site name	Typology	Reason for low score
30	Spa Esplanade/Western Esplanade	Amenity	boundary, facilities, and furniture
35	Kingsmead Field Village Green†	Amenity	signage, boundary, and car park
39	Chestfield Recreation Ground	Amenity	signage, boundary, and biodiversity
48	Mill Lane greenspace, Harbledown	Amenity	signage, safety, facilities, and car park
436	Cormorant Way Play Area	Play	signage, facilities, furniture and boundary
439	Plover Close Play Area	Play	signage, facilities, furniture, and biodiversity
449	Candler's Way, Shalmsford	Play	signage and biodiversity
455	Kingston Play Area	Play	biodiversity
459	Adisham Rec Play Area	Play	signage and biodiversity
473	Honeysuckle Way Play Area	Play	signage and furniture
476	Kendal Meadow Play Area	Play	signage and furniture
482	Ince Road Play Area	Play	biodiversity
484	Chartham Hatch Play Area	Play	biodiversity
494	Avon Close Play	Play	signage and biodiversity
500	Hollow Lane Play Area	Play	biodiversity
530	Sturry Road Community Garden play area	Play	signage, safety, and boundary
420	Dane John Garden	Parks	rates just below quality threshold. Signage, facilities, furniture, and lighting
424	Tower Hill Tea Garden	Parks	rates just below quality threshold. Signage, furniture, biodiversity, and lighting
430	St Mary de Castro	Parks	signage, facilities, furniture, and car park
431	Greyfriars Garden	Parks	signage, facilities, furniture, and car park
535	Saxon Shore View	Natural	Facilities, furniture, and overall aesthetic
537	Westbere Marshes	Natural	signage, boundary, furniture, and car park
555	Covet Lane Wood	Natural	signage, facilities, furniture, and car park
559	No Man's Orchard Nature Reserve, Chartham	Natural	facilities and car park

* Site scores previously undertaken by CCC.

† Acknowledged site has recently had major enhancement works undertaken

APPENDIX TWO: DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

The following sets out some of the key considerations to the design/quality for different types of open spaces.

Allotments

- ◀ Linked to pedestrian and cycle paths
- ◀ Plots should ideally be situated away from the shade of trees
- ◀ Effective drainage through natural soil characteristics and/or land drainage installations
- ◀ Minimum of one water point
- ◀ Secure perimeter fencing with lockable gate for vehicular access
- ◀ Sign at entrance detailing any applicable ownership, rules, emergency contact etc

Amenity greenspace

- ◀ Closely integrated with any development to provide a greening effect to the environment
- ◀ Close positioning of multiple space, can contribute to connectivity and landscape quality
- ◀ Focus for such provision is for informal recreational activities such as 'kickabout' football, sitting, and dog walking etc
- ◀ Ideally incorporate shade from existing mature trees or planting of new trees
- ◀ Open views for natural surveillance
- ◀ Signage to welcome users, contact details, and set out any constraints of use

Natural greenspace

- ◀ Expected to heavily contribute to green infrastructure by reinforcing existing and creation of new corridors to link and close gaps on the existing networks including for example biodiversity net gain and Local Nature Recovery
- ◀ Minimise severance impact of road networks on wider green infrastructure
- ◀ Existing wildlife value protected and enhanced through restoration and creation of new habitats
- ◀ Variations in vegetation structure and topography to ensure habitat diversity and landscape effect
- ◀ Appropriate footpaths and materials. Main paths could be hard surfaced with loose fill material or simply marked by mowing where natural drainage is adequate. For wet areas, timber boardwalks should be installed
- ◀ Fencing and gates/stiles installed as appropriate to reduce user pressure on zones of conservation importance
- ◀ Interpretation signage installed as appropriate.

Parks and gardens

- ◀ Appropriate design and layout of interest including suitable planting
- ◀ Larger sites may accommodate more formal sport pitches, play and youth facilities and other features. Sites large enough to accommodate pitch sports should be, in part, of a level gradient to accommodate such activities.
- ◀ Larger facilities should offer secure bicycle parking.
- ◀ Access for passive recreation encouraged through especially generous provision of seating and hard surfaced paths. Particular attention also paid to surveillance
- ◀ Fencing must integrate aesthetically into the surroundings and be of durable materials.

Provision for children and young people

- ◀ Ideally located within a greenspace or park and close enough to pedestrian routes or

dwellings to enable natural surveillance

- ◀ Incorporate necessary buffer zones (20-30m subject to type of play)
- ◀ Away from exposure to prevailing winds
- ◀ Linked to pedestrian and vehicular routes by hard surfaced paths, accessible for all.
- ◀ Larger facilities should offer secure bicycle parking
- ◀ Attractive and stimulating environment for both active and passive play; designed for aesthetic cohesion to a unified theme
- ◀ Equipment designed and installed in accordance with EN1176 and EN1177 (or subsequent updates). Equipment selected and positioned to avoid the possibility of views into neighbouring properties.
- ◀ Features to encourage inclusive play, e.g. wide transfer platforms on multi-play units, roundabouts flush with ground level, back supports on equipment, handrails, sound chimes and textured surfaces.
- ◀ Separate zones for younger and older children, possibly within the same activity area, or by means of two distinct activity areas in proximity at the same location.
- ◀ Signage to name the site and welcome users, also to indicate constraints on use and provide contact details. It is essential that dogs are discouraged, at least through the signage, but sometimes also through fencing.
- ◀ Creatively designed and suitably located seating
- ◀ Any trees and shrubs should be strategically placed to provide areas of shade and play opportunities without obstructing informal surveillance.
- ◀ All plants selected are tough and resistant to damage with low maintenance requirements and not poisonous, thorny or otherwise hazardous

APPENDIX THREE: STRATEGIC/MULTI-FUNCTIONAL SITES

There are several sites (38 in total, recognised in Objective 9) with a more strategic and/or multi-functional role which serve a wider catchment area. For parks, these are referred to as 'destination' sites and for amenity greenspace these are referred to as 'recreation' sites.

The priority should be to explore options to enhance the quality and access of these key sites given the important role across the district and to individual analysis areas.

Id	Site name	Typology	Strategic/ multifunctional
24	Reculver Country Park Amenity	Amenity greenspace	Recreation
31	Hampton Recreation Ground	Amenity greenspace	Recreation
34	Vauxhall Field	Amenity greenspace	Recreation
35	Kingsmead Field Village Green	Amenity greenspace	Recreation
37	Bridge Recreation Ground	Amenity greenspace	Recreation
39	Chestfield Recreation Ground	Amenity greenspace	Recreation
42	Marine Parade	Amenity greenspace	Recreation
46	Mariners View, Seasalter	Amenity greenspace	Recreation
47	Columbia Avenue	Amenity greenspace	Recreation
52	Birch Road	Amenity greenspace	Recreation
53	Tannery Field, Rheims Way	Amenity greenspace	Recreation
57	Toddlers Cove	Amenity greenspace	Recreation
66	Pilgrim's Way	Amenity greenspace	Recreation
68	Franklyn Road / Pardoner Close	Amenity greenspace	Recreation
70	Suffolk Road	Amenity greenspace	Recreation
106	Upper Harbledown Playing Field, London Road	Amenity greenspace	Recreation
146	Wickhambreaux Recreation Ground	Amenity greenspace	Recreation
162	Hales Drive playing field	Amenity greenspace	Recreation
169	Field Avenue AGS	Amenity greenspace	Recreation
201	Long Meadow Way / Westerham Close Greenspace	Amenity greenspace	Recreation
212	Church Lane, Seasalter	Amenity greenspace	Recreation
222	Trilby Way AGS	Amenity greenspace	Recreation
283	Sanderling Park	Amenity greenspace	Recreation
294	Central Parade	Amenity greenspace	Recreation
420	Dane John Garden	Parks and Gardens	Destination
421	Memorial Park	Parks and Gardens	Destination
423	Whitstable Castle	Parks and Gardens	Destination
428	Westgate Gardens	Parks and Gardens	Destination
429	Canterbury Castle	Parks and Gardens	Destination

APPENDIX FOUR: ALTERNATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS APPROACH

The Council is exploring alternative approaches for contributions towards open space provision. Local authorities often adopted open space in new developments and a Commuted Sum was sought from the developer to cover the first c.15 years of grounds maintenance costs. In this scenario, the cost would be calculated by aggregating the first 15 years of maintenance costs and that combined sum would be paid by the developer to the Local Authority where it would be 'ring-fenced' to cover the new site specific maintenance costs.

After 15 years the Local Authority would continue to maintain the site without the benefit of a commuted sum.

More recently the Local Authority has not adopted new open spaces associated with new developments and developers have established alternative models for the ongoing maintenance of sites usually with a third party undertaking the site management and charging homeowners a service charge.

If CCC were to look to adopt some open spaces there is a need to protect the authority from longer-term revenue / capital pressures. This is where the possibility of an endowment comes forward.

What is an endowment?

An endowment is a transfer, in the form of cash or other income generating assets, to another party for a defined purpose. This model sees the management funded from the interest generated by the endowment lump sum - e.g. £1m invested and protected to generate £35,000 pa.

Example:

A developer approaches CCC to test the financial implications of delivering policy DS24 on its 300 home development. The Design and Access Management Plan establishes the following:

- 300 new homes equates to approx 720 new residents.
- 6.36ha of new open space is required for 720 new residents (based on Open Space Strategy position of c.8ha of open space is required for 1,000 head of population).
- Ground maintenance and replacement costs are calculated at £45,000 per annum.
- An Endowment Calculator determines that an endowment sum of £1.3m is required to cover the grounds maintenance costs (3.5% return on £1.3m = £45,500).
- The developer transfers the agreed endowment sum via s106 obligations to the council for long term costs.

Why use an endowment?

For developers, endowments provide an exit route from involvement with, or responsibility for, a particular asset or site. For CCC this is an open space.

For CCC, it enables the future responsibility of an asset to be placed with another organisation which is better suited to managing it in the long term.

Endowments protect CCC from the financial implication of taking on the ownership, long term management and maintenance of open spaces associated with future strategic housing sites.

Is there an alternative to an endowment?

As referenced previously, commuted sums (a one-off payment from a developer to cover management costs for a specified number of years - often 15) can be used to offset the costs to a local authority of taking on the management of a site. The downside of a commuted sum is that the funds are drawn down each year until all the funds are spent.

This could be partly mitigated by extending the life of a commuted sum to 35 years or longer. The recipient of the commuted sum could also look to invest a significant proportion of the commuted sum (i.e. the sum received to pay for site management in years 6-35) and re-invest that interest into the commuted sum. This would extend the life of the commuted sum but not to the point of in perpetuity.