

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

Part 3: Open space standards and audit methodology

3. East Ayrshire’s Open Space Standards and audit

The purpose of this section is to set out the standards that have been established for open spaces throughout East Ayrshire. Open space standards are an integral part of the Local Development Plan 2; the vision and aims of the plan make clear that delivering and maintaining quality and multi-functional green infrastructure is a key means in which high quality development and thriving communities can be achieved.

Policy OS1 of LDP2 provides a detailed policy framework for building green infrastructure into new development. Policy OS1 is supported by public and private open space standards, set out in Schedule 1 of the Plan. The standards ensure that new development is guided by clear quantitative requirements, which take account of accessibility and quality of existing open space within the local area.

Open space requirements are expressed through 3 different types of open space:

Private open space

All residential development is required to meet private open space requirements, to ensure all houses (and flats) have adequate seclusion and privacy, contributing to the quality of life of residents.

Private Open Space comprises all land within the curtilage of a dwelling house with the exception of land to the front of the dwelling, land occupied by driveways, garages or parking spaces. The private open space standards, as set out in the Green Infrastructure Strategy, have been developed to ensure that each house has adequate seclusion and privacy for its residents whilst also contributing to creating a sense of place within the development.

Standards may be relaxed at the discretion of the Council where considered appropriate. All new residential developments must provide the minimum standards as set out below:

Development type	Minimum Quantitative Standard
Detached house and semi-detached house	35m ² per bedroom or a minimum of 70m ² (whichever is greater)
Terraced house	25m ² per bedroom or a minimum of 50m ² (whichever is greater)
Flats	10 m ² per bedroom
Care home	10 m ² per bedroom or bed space
Supported housing / accommodation	25 m ² per bedroom

Amenity open space

Amenity open space is defined as natural and semi-natural open spaces, green corridors and landscape framework incorporating informal recreation spaces and green spaces. Amenity open space is critical to ensure new development demonstrates good placemaking and includes space for nature. All residential developments of 4 or more units and commercial developments that meet a certain size threshold are required to provide amenity open space.

Development type	Proposal	Requirement
Residential	Development of 4 units or more	20 square metres of amenity open space per household
Retail and leisure	Over 5 hectares in area or have a gross floor area of more than 10,000 square metres	12 square metres of amenity and recreational space per 100 square metres of gross floor area
Business	Over 5 hectares in area or have a gross floor area of more than 10,000 square metres	9 square metres of amenity and recreational space per 100 square metres of gross floor area
Industry and Distribution	Over 5 hectares in area or have a gross floor area of more than 10,000 square metres	6 square metres of amenity and recreational space per 100 square metres of gross floor area

Recreational open space

Recreational open space is defined as equipped play areas, natural/unequipped play areas, play parks, public parks and gardens, outdoor sports facilities (such as green gyms), sports pitches, allotments, civic spaces etc. Play areas and play parks can be spaces for young children and/ or older children / young adults. By definition, recreational open space must be of a scale and nature that it can actively be used; its use must be more than just for improving the local environment and attractiveness of an area.

Recreational open space is required for residential development of 10 units or more.

Recreational open space methodology

Step 1

The methodology for determining the recreational open space requirement takes account of surrounding context. As seen in the flow chart below, the first stage of the requirement is to consider whether there is an existing surplus or deficit of recreational open space within the settlement.

- **How to determine if there is a surplus or deficit of recreational GI within a settlement?**

The assessment outcomes for each settlement, in accord with the open space audit, are summarised within **Section 5**, Table XX. For each settlement these can also be viewed individually within Section 6.

Step 2

If there is a deficit, developers will be expected to provide on-site recreational green infrastructure to the minimum standards set out within Schedule 1 of the LDP2.

If there is a surplus, developers are required to consider whether there is an area of recreational green infrastructure space over 0.2ha in size within 250 metres of the dwelling. For proposals of more than one dwelling, this includes 250 metres of each individual residential plot.

The maps within **Section 6** identify areas of green space which are 0.2ha in size or larger within the settlements of East Ayrshire. The maps should be used to determine if any of the green infrastructure spaces on the map are within 250 metres of each individual residential plot.

Note: These maps may differ from the safeguarded open space which is identified within [LDP2 Volume 2](#) settlement maps.

- **What is required where an area of recreational green infrastructure/open space over 0.2 ha in size is within 250 metres of the boundary?**

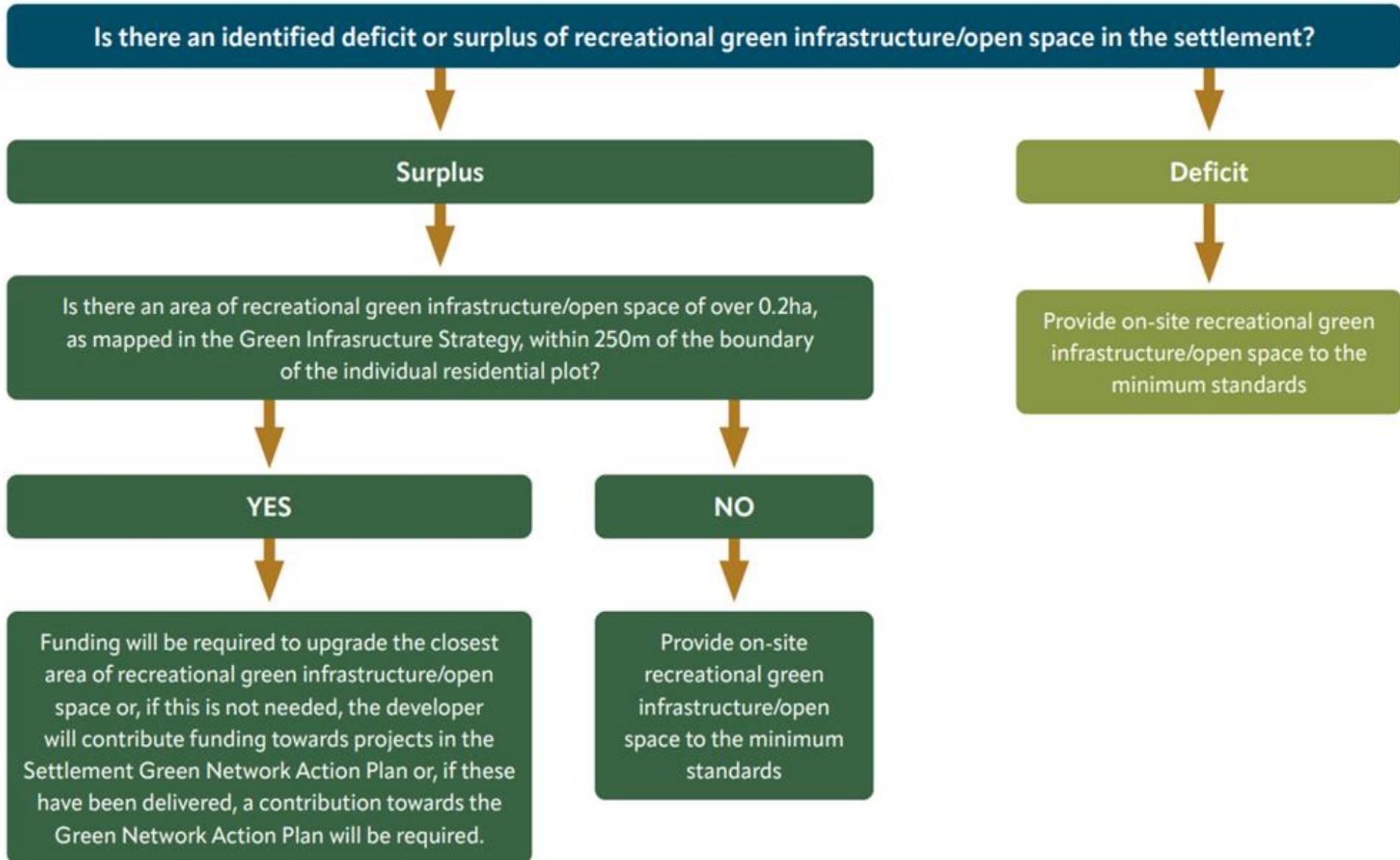
Developer contributions would be sought. Funding will be required to upgrade the closest area of recreational green infrastructure/open space,

or if this is not needed or appropriate, the developer will contribute funding towards projects in the Settlement Green Network Action Plan. If these projects have been delivered, then a contribution towards the Green Network Action Plan will be required.

Within **Section 6**, for each settlement, Green Network Action Plans are identified. This is where developer contribution funds would be directed for the settlement.

- **What is required where no area of recreational green infrastructure/open space over 0.2 ha in size is within 250 metres of the boundary?**

Developers will be expected to provide on-site recreational green infrastructure/open space to the minimum standards as set out within [Schedule 1 of LDP2](#).



The open space audit

The approach to green infrastructure is underpinned by the open space audit that has been undertaken for all East Ayrshire settlements. The open space audit is essential to the implementation of the LDP open space requirements; the results of the audit help determine whether new spaces of open space are needed or whether efforts should focus on improving existing spaces.

In East Ayrshire, our aim is that:

- each settlement should have 5.2 hectares of quality and accessible open space per 1,000 population.
 - Quality is defined as achieving more than 50% in the qualitative assessment outlined below.
 - Accessibility is defined as being 250m from home to a quality open space.

The open space audit sets out, on a settlement-by-settlement basis, where this aim is being met and where it is not met i.e. whether there is a surplus or deficit of open space. This has been determined by a detailed assessment of open space though out all settlements.

Table 1 in part 1 of this strategy outlines the different types of open spaces that have been included in the audit, as described in PAN 65.

Audit Methodology

The audit focused on quantity, quality and accessibility of green infrastructure within settlements. Site assessment criteria were developed to determine the quality and accessibility of existing green infrastructure. This locally adopted assessment methodology is based on the Greenspace Scotland's quality guide and Local Environmental Audit and Management System (LEAMS).

The audit looked at open spaces over 0.2 hectares in size, as well sites out with the settlement boundary that are within walking distance and encourage community access. All open space types were included in the audit except for school grounds. In order to provide a scoring threshold for open space, which will enable the determination of surplus and deficits, leading to opportunities and actions for each settlement, a number of criteria had to be established for qualitative site assessment. The assessment focused on:

- Accessibility and connectivity
- Attractiveness
- Contribution to biodiversity and ecological networks
- Active, supporting health and well being
- Community Support

Green Infrastructure Assessment Criteria

Relevant Assessment Criteria	High Scoring	Moderate Scoring	Low Scoring	Not applicable
	(5)	(3)	(1)	
Meets appropriate DDA¹ requirements/ disabled user needs	Compliant in all respects with DDA, includes specific elements supporting disabled use	DDA compliant in terms of grades and main routes step and barrier free	Non DDA compliant with barriers to free access for disabled and other user groups	DDA compliant not appropriate or achievable on a site of this character/location/type
Well located close to a community	Integral with community infrastructure and local path and greenspace networks	Direct, safe and legible connections to local communities	Poorly sited with clear severance between greenspace and other community infrastructure	Connections to community not relevant
Provide surfaced, high-quality paths	Appropriate path surface, well maintained with no management or drainage issues	Appropriate path surface with some minor maintenance and/or drainage issues	Poor quality or inappropriate path surface for location or levels of use; significant maintenance or drainage issues	No paths expected on a site of this type or size (e.g. waterbody, dense woodland or scrub, small scale amenity space)
Connects with other transport modes	Good connectivity with fixed transport links, quality bus routes, cycle and path networks	Connects to other path and cycleway networks provided by footways and footpaths	Poorly connected with no obvious path networks or transport modes	Connectivity not available or appropriate on a site of this character/location/type
Allows movement in and between places	Provides for highly permeable boundaries and multiple points of entry/access as part of a path or greenspace network	Provides routes and connections connecting places	Poorly connected with paths and natural desire lines unprovided for or restricted	Movement between places not relevant to the site

¹ DDA – Disability Discrimination Act

Accessible entrances in the right places	Entry points well placed and accessible to encourage safe access and use	Entrances satisfactory	Entrances poor by reason of siting; safe accessibility and connection to communities	Entrance locations determined by other factors and non-relevant to the site
Offers connecting path network and signage	High quality, legible way marking and signage indicates links to wider path and cycleway network	Some good connections but signage incomplete and/or no way marking	Limited connections and no signage or way marking to indicate wider connectivity	Signage inappropriate to the location/site
Attractive, with a positive image	Overall quality image, feel and appeal created through character and quality of the elements	Attractive with many positive elements but includes issues that need addressing	Poor image and low level of appeal/ attractiveness likely to generate a negative image	Attractiveness not an issue by reason of site/character or use
Attractive setting for urban areas	Contributes significantly to the quality, character and setting of the urban area/settlement/place	Contributes to quality but the profile and level of visibility limit the capacity to	Significantly impact on place quality does little to support place	Quality by reason of location or quality and image of the site not relevant
Quality materials, equipment and furniture	Provides quality suite of external/public realm furniture and equipment with good materials	Mixed quality with some elements in need of renewal or upgrading to remain fit for purpose	Poor quality finishes, materials and equipment that limit appeal and use	Not relevant
Attractive plants and landscape elements	Offers attractive plant assemblages (native or exotic) that support place character and quality	Offers a variable quality of plants and landscape elements that supports quality but could be better generally	Poor quality or inappropriate planting and landscape management	Plant and landscape elements not relevant to function and/or type of space
Welcoming boundaries and entrance areas	User friendly boundaries and entries offer clear sense of welcome and signal community value and use	Functional boundaries and entrances define site with neutral impact on character or functionality	Poor quality boundaries impact negatively on perceptions of place	Entrances and boundary treatments not relevant to site and/or location
Facilities in clean, safe and usable condition	Spaces and facilities clean, tidy and clearly valued, well used and well maintained	Spaces in usable condition but issues evident with cleanliness, and condition	Facilities either in poor condition or issues with cleanliness and condition likely to restrict use	Condition of facilities not relevant to the site

Low levels of litter and adequate bins	No evidence of litter and litter bins (where provided) in good condition and maintained	Low levels of litter with bins evident and litter generally localised and/or short term	Litter clearly an issue with established litter problem and bins absent or not adequately maintained	Litter not relevant
Well maintained	Clear indications of appropriate levels of maintenance well targeted to the site that supports quality of place	Level of maintenance generally good but challenged by use/ misuse	Levels of maintenance failing to support quality of place and address use/misuse	Maintenance not relevant to the site by reason of scale and/ or other management activity
Contribute positively to biodiversity	Biodiversity issues are clearly evidenced within the site and contribute to site quality	Biodiversity contributes through semi-natural elements but no other evidence of active management	Opportunity to support biodiversity not taken and site offers little positive value biodiversity	Not relevant by nature of the space and function
Habitats large enough to sustain wildlife populations	Site strongly supports native populations by green networks and quality of landscape elements	Site supports some native populations but fragmented and value limited to site	Site fragmented and unconnected to wider networks with little habitat value	Habitat opportunity and value not relevant
Offers a diversity of habitats	Offers a diversity of habitats that offer good connections with extended edges and linkages	Offers a range of habitat types but connections and the range of habitat types could be stronger	Poor quality and attention to habitat development	Habitat diversity not relevant
Part of the wider landscape structure and setting	A key part of a wider network and landscape character area	Contributes to wider networks and landscape character areas	Poorly connected and very limited contribution to the wider landscape setting	Landscape setting not relevant
Connects with wider green networks	Offers strong connections and plays an important role within the wider Green Networks	Offers limited connections and contribution to the Green Network	Poorly connected and represents fragmented and discrete site with very limited role within the Green Network	Not relevant
Habitat protection and access	Appropriate, supported by information and good path routing access and habitat protection	Working and no evidence of problems	Suffering from other uses and need for management attention	On the site

Resource efficient site and facilities	Clear attention to resource and sustainability issue evidenced on site (SUDS/recycling/encouragement to reduce litter)	Fit for purpose demonstrating some evidence of attention to resource efficiency	Evidence of inappropriate resource activity that offers very limited benefits to user or quality of place	Resource efficiency not relevant issue
Provides places for a range of outdoor activities	Good diverse range of activity reflecting user needs, setting location and character of the site	Range of activity reflecting user needs, setting, location and character of the site poor,	Very limited range of activity that does not reflect anticipated user needs and site context	Not relevant
Diverse play, sport and recreational opportunities	A range of challenging play and sport activity provided for a breadth of age and user groups	Play and sports facilities provided by limited range	Play and sports facilities not provided in locations where such facilities would be appropriate	Play and sports facilities not relevant to this type of space and/or location
Providing places for social interaction	Offers good spaces and places for social activity that are used by communities and include supporting furniture	Offers spaces for social activity	Offers none or very limited areas considered safe and usable for social activity	Not relevant
Appropriate, high quality facilities meeting needs	Provides a well-used site that clearly reflects needs, providing high quality facilities	Provides for a range of activities that address need and offers good quality facilities	Provides a range of activities that appears unconnected to local need and is of indifferent quality	Appropriateness of facilities and need is not relevant
Appropriate facilities for location and size	Facilities are appropriate to function and include service elements such as toilets, lit paths, range of play etc	Facilities are restricted given the scale and function of the site	Facilities are poor or non-existent for this scale and function of site	Appropriateness of facilities is not relevant
Carefully sited facilities for a range of ages	Facilities are well sited offering natural surveillance, readily accessible and suited to all ages	Facilities are well sited and accessible, but locations may not address all user needs	Facilities are poorly sites, restricting access, compromising safe use or access and offer barriers to activity	Not relevant

Adaptable to changing needs and uses	Greenspace offers good flexibility and adaptability for use, capable of accommodating changing needs	Greenspace is flexible but any significant change of use would require major change	Greenspace is very inflexible unlikely to be able to address changing needs	Adaptability of use is not relevant
Community involvement in management	Evidence or knowledge of active and direct community participation in site planning and site management	Community participation through consultation on site planning and management	Community consultation not part of the planning and management arrangements	Issues of community engagement not relevant
Safe and welcoming	Site offers safe welcoming image through a range of positive measures such as signage, lighting and sightlines	Site is welcoming but issues of safety have potential to impact on more vulnerable user groups	Site is clearly neither safe nor welcoming to a majority of users	Issue of safety and sense of welcome not relevant
Good levels of natural surveillance	Site offers good natural surveillance from surrounding areas and complies with Safe by Design principles	Site generally overlooked with main areas offering good natural surveillance	Site offers very limited natural surveillance and issues of perceived safety therefore arise natural surveillance	Not applicable to this site
No evidence of anti-social behaviour	Site offers no evidence of anti-social behaviour and no evidence of activity likely to establish perceived threats to users	Site generally has safe quality but with some limited evidence of anti-social behaviour or misuse	Site shows evidence of persistent antisocial behaviour	Anti-social behaviour not relevant to this site
Appropriate lighting levels	Appropriate lighting throughout the site with no obvious management or user issues	Appropriate lighting at entrances and where appropriate main routes with only minor lighting issues	Lighting poor, restricting use	Lighting not relevant to this site
Sense of local identity and place	Positively contributes to local identity and clear sense of place established by the character of quality of the site	Contributes to sense of place and local identity	Negatively contributes to sense of place and local identity	Local identity and sense of place not relevant

Good routes to wider community facilities	Provides connecting routes to schools, library, community facilities and transport nodes	Provides limited connections to community infrastructure	Provides very restricted connections to community infrastructure	Issues of community connectivity not relevant to this site
Distinctive and memorable places	Creates a distinctive and memorable quality of places that supports local culture identity	Contributes in some areas or parts to distinctiveness	Offers no qualities that could be regarded as distinctive or memorable	Not relevant
Catering for a range of functions and activities	Offers a multifunctional space that addresses need is fit for purpose	Offers a range of functionality	Offers very restricted functionality	Function and capacity to address a range of activity not relevant

However, it should be noted that open spaces differ in context, size and function and so it is important to focus the criteria on specific typologies. i.e. All the criteria will not be relevant to all open space types. Therefore, for assessment, the criteria was applied to the different types of open space as outlined in the table below.

Applying assessment criteria to different green spaces

	Criteria should apply	Public Parks and Gardens	Amenity Open spaces	Play areas	Sports areas and playing fields	Green corridors	Natural and semi natural spaces	Private grounds	Cemeteries and graveyards
Accessible and well-connected open spaces	Meets appropriate DDA requirements disabled user needs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Well located close to a community	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
	Provide surfaced, high-quality paths	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
	Connects with other transport modes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
	Allows movement in and between places	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Accessible entrances in the right places	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
	Offers connecting path network and signage	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Attractive and Appealing Places	Attractive, with a positive image	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Attractive setting for urban areas	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Quality materials, equipment and furniture	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
	Attractive plants and landscape elements	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Welcoming boundaries and entrance areas	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
	Facilities in clean, safe and usable condition	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Low levels of litter and adequate bins	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Well maintained	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Biodiverse, supporting ecological networks	Contribute positively to biodiversity	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Habitats large enough to sustain wildlife populations	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	Offers a diversity of habitats	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Part of the wider landscape structure and setting	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Connects with wider green networks	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

	Balance between habitat protection and access	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	Resource efficient site and facilities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Active, supporting health and well being	Provides places for a range of outdoor activities	Yes	No						
	Diverse play, sport and recreational opportunities	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
	Providing places for social interaction	Yes							
	Appropriate, high quality facilities meeting needs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
	Appropriate facilities for location and size	Yes							
	Carefully sited facilities for a range of ages	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
	Adaptable to changing needs and uses	Yes							
Community Supported	Community involvement in management	Yes	No						
	Safe and welcoming	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
	Good levels of natural surveillance	Yes							
	No evidence of anti-social behaviour	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
	Appropriate lighting levels	Yes							
	Sense of local identity and place	Yes							
	Good routes to wider community facilities	Yes							
	Distinctive and memorable places	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Catering for a range of functions and activities	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	

All sites over 0.2 hectares have been given a score out of 5 for each relevant criterion. A maximum score has been given and then the percentage score for the individual site has been calculated. The quality standard is that all publicly usable and accessible open spaces will score 50% or better on the locally used quality assessment. The following table provides an example of the assessment sheet that was used.

Sample Assessment Pro-forma

The table below illustrates a sample assessment of a play park within East Ayrshire. This approach allows the review to assess and score each type of space.

Site Name: Open Space Typology: Amenity Greenspace				
	Assessment Criteria	Score	N/A	Site Comments
Active site supporting health and well being	Meets appropriate DDA requirements/ disabled user needs	5		
	Well located close to a community	4		
	Provide surfaced, high-quality paths	1		
	Connects with other transport modes		X	
	Allows movement in and between places	2		
	Accessible entrances in the right places	3		
	Offers connecting path network and signage	3		
Attractive and Appealing Places	Attractive, with a positive image	4		
	Attractive setting for urban areas	5		
	Quality materials, equipment and furniture	3		
	Attractive plants and landscape elements	2		
	Welcoming boundaries and entrance areas	2		
	Facilities in clean, safe and usable condition	2		
	Low levels of litter and adequate bins	1		
	Well maintained	3		
Biodiverse and contributes to ecological networks	Contribute positively to biodiversity	4		
	Habitats large enough to sustain wildlife populations		X	
	Offers a diversity of habitats	2		
	Part of the wider landscape structure and setting	3		
	Connects with wider green networks	4		
	Balance between habitat protection and access		X	
	Resource efficient site and facilities	5		

Active, supporting health and well being	Provides places for a range of outdoor activities	4		
	Diverse play, sport and recreational opportunities		X	
	Providing places for social interaction	3		
	Appropriate, high quality facilities meeting needs	3		
	Appropriate facilities for location and size	3		
	Carefully sited facilities for a range of ages	2		
	Adaptable to changing needs and uses	1		
Community Support	Community involvement in management	4		
	Safe and welcoming	5		
	Good levels of natural surveillance	4		
	No evidence of anti-social behaviour	3		
	Appropriate lighting levels	2		
	Sense of local identity and place	2		
	Good routes to wider community facilities	2		
	Distinctive and memorable places	2		
	Catering for a range of functions and activities	3		
	Total Score	101		
	Maximum Score (5 points for every relevant criterion)	190		
	Percentage	53%		

The scoring has enabled the Council to determine if there is a deficit or surplus of quality green infrastructure within each settlement based on the standards that have been established.