EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Local Development Plan 2

Green Infrastructure Strategy

Non-statutory Planning Guidance

2024

East Ayrshire Council in Partnership with East Ayrshire Leisure

Green Infrastructure and Green Network Strategy: Volume 1

Strategic Overview and Open Space Standards

September 2015

East Ayrshire COUNCIL

east ayrshire leisure

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1. Introduction

1.1 Vision for an East Ayrshire Green Network

1.2 Structure of Report

The Green Infrastructure and Green Network Strategy for East Ayrshire is divided into 4 volumes:

- Strategic Overview and Standards
- Settlement Reviews and Action Plans
- Cemetery Strategy
- Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2015 - 2017

The first part of this volume sets the context for a strategy for green infrastructure in East Ayrshire and includes a review of open space type and their benefits and an audit of the current policy framework surrounding green infrastructure and open space. This is followed by an outline of the open space standards which are recommended on a local and a regional level for public and private open space.

The third part of the report will identify strategic recommendations that will ensure a holistic approach to green infrastructure development and will demonstrate the role that green infrastructure has to play in local and regional plans, priorities and policies.

Finally, part four of this volume will outline monitoring arrangements that will be put in place for ongoing evaluation of the strategy and its implementation.

1.3 Scope of the Study

East Ayrshire Council, addressing the Scottish Government guidance in PAN 65 Planning and Open Space, commissioned an Open Space Audit and Open Space Strategy in 2009. This report summarised the findings of the 2009 Open Space Audit. The Strategy provided a strategic vision for provision, development, regeneration and management of Open Space within East Ayrshire.

The Open Space Audit included a comprehensive audit of all open spaces within the East Ayrshire settlements based on the PAN65 typologies. In addition other larger spaces outside the settlement boundaries were audited, predominantly Green Corridors and Semi Natural Green Space based on information from East Ayrshire Council.

This 2009 strategy and audit has been reviewed in 2014 to assess the current provision of open space in terms of protected spaces and their function and then consider local need and demand. This has been used to develop settlement by settlement action plans and prepare a vision for green infrastructure development throughout East Ayrshire.

1.4 SEA Environmental Report

This document is a revision of the 2009 strategy which was used to undertake and produce a Strategic Environmental Assessment. There are no material changes from the 2009 report to the 2014 revision.

2. Context for Green Infrastructure and a Green Network in East Ayrshire

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2.1 East Ayrshire Green Infrastructure and Green Network Strategy

2.1.1 Benefits of the Strategy

There are a number of benefits of producing a strategic document to guide the future of East Ayrshire's Green Infrastructure.

- Establishing a vision and identifying targeted actions can address issues of deficiencies in open space provision / facilities, and protect areas that are valuable and valued;
- Effective links between green infrastructure planning, design and management, and the involvement of local communities, can ensure long term viability of open space that meets current and future needs;
- Participation of a wide range of partnership agencies, stakeholder groups and community groups in the decision making process ensures the Strategy considers the views of all interested parties;
- Ensuring that open space provision is of appropriate quality, within easy walking distance from people's homes and linked by paths and green corridors;
- The strategy is intended to stimulate the regeneration and enhanced management of green infrastructure to ensure that people and communities have ready access to a hierarchy of open spaces that address local and district needs, are fit for purpose and fulfil a broad spectrum of physical, social, health, local amenity and environmental interests;
- The strategy seeks to ensure all open space within the Council boundary is strategically managed to deliver meaningful benefits to local communities, whilst securing best value and providing a clear and prioritised framework for further investment and management.

2.2 Definition of Green Infrastructure and Green Networks

The European Commission defines green infrastructure as "*the use of ecosystems, green spaces and water in strategic land use planning to deliver environmental and quality of life benefits. It includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, wetlands, road verges, allotments and private gardens. Green infrastructure can contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, natural disaster risk mitigation, protection against flooding and erosion as well as biodiversity conservation.*"

Green infrastructure is not just about greenspaces like parks and open spaces, it also incorporates blue infrastructure including sustainable urban drainage, swales, wetlands, rivers and their banks, and other water courses. The figure below seeks to demystify 'green infrastructure' by setting out in basic terms examples of individual components of green infrastructure, at different scales.

Considering green spaces or connections as infrastructure arises because simple things like trees, greenspaces and watercourses can provide valuable services in an ecological way. Green infrastructure can deliver on functions and services such as shelter, access and travel, sustainable urban drainage, pollution mitigation and food production - as part of a wider ecosystem. Moreover this approach has the added benefit of

enhancing habitats and creating attractive places. This multifunctional nature of green infrastructure is one of its intrinsic benefits and can operate at differing levels.

Individual elements of green infrastructure can serve a useful green infrastructure purpose, without being connected. However, when green infrastructure components are linked together to form green networks further combined benefits can be achieved at a strategic level.

Green infrastructure should be thought about at every scale of planning, from the strategic framework (allowing cross boundary issues to be considered) right down through neighbourhoods and within streets to the individual house or flat.

2.3 Importance of Green Infrastructure and Green Networks

Green Networks are becoming increasingly important as we move forward in addressing the following challenges:

- Environmental sustainability
- Health and healthier lifestyles
- Inclusion & social equity
- Sustainable economic growth
- Quality of place and place competitiveness.

Green networks have a key role in delivering outputs across a breadth of environmental, social and economic goals linking to cross-cutting themes in both the Community Plan and Local Development Plan. Equally important, is the need to deliver real and meaningful benefits to communities that address local needs in a manner that offers 'best value'. This Strategy, supported by a detailed Open Space Audit, offers an innovative and powerful 'tool kit' to improve the green infrastructure and open space management within East Ayrshire and can support the development and implementation of the Community Led Action Plans.

Agenda / Challenge	Benefits
Environmental sustainability	• reducing CO^2 emissions by providing non-vehicular travel routes encouraging walking and cycling • providing carbon storage and sequestration in vegetation • providing shelter and protection from extreme weather • managing flood risk: living roofs, large trees and soft landscape areas absorb heavy rainfall • providing for storage of surface water in times of peak flow in SUDS and other water features • cleaning and cooling the air, water and soil, countering the 'heat island' effect of urban areas • saving energy: through using natural rather than engineered solutions • saving energy: living roofs insulate buildings, and large trees provide shade, reducing the need for air conditioning in the summer and raising ambient temperatures in the winter, reduction in heating costs in the winter due to slowing of wind speeds in urban areas • supplying locally sourced timber, biomass or other bio-fuels to replace fossil fuels • reducing pollution through use of SUDS and buffer strips • providing new and linking existing habitats or natural features, to allow species movement • protecting aquatic species through appropriate management of waterside habitats

	• preventing fragmentation of habitats • allowing diverse habitats to be created which are rich in flora and fauna
Health and healthier lifestyles	• encouraging exercise and physical activity by providing quality green spaces for walking, cycling, sports and play • providing better opportunities for active travel and physical activity • improving mental well-being by providing access to nature and attractive green spaces and breathing spaces • providing opportunities for growing food locally and healthy eating
Inclusion & social equity	• creating green spaces for socialising, interaction and events • more opportunities and places for children to play • providing improved physical connections through green networks to get between places; and to communities, services, friends and family and wider green spaces • providing spaces for practising and promoting horticultural skills • creating opportunities for community participation and volunteering
Sustainable economic growth	• improving the image of a place • boosting property values including house prices due to proximity to greenspace • helping developers get the most out of the site by combining uses, e.g. open space + SUDS, helping development viability • attracting businesses and inward investors by creating attractive

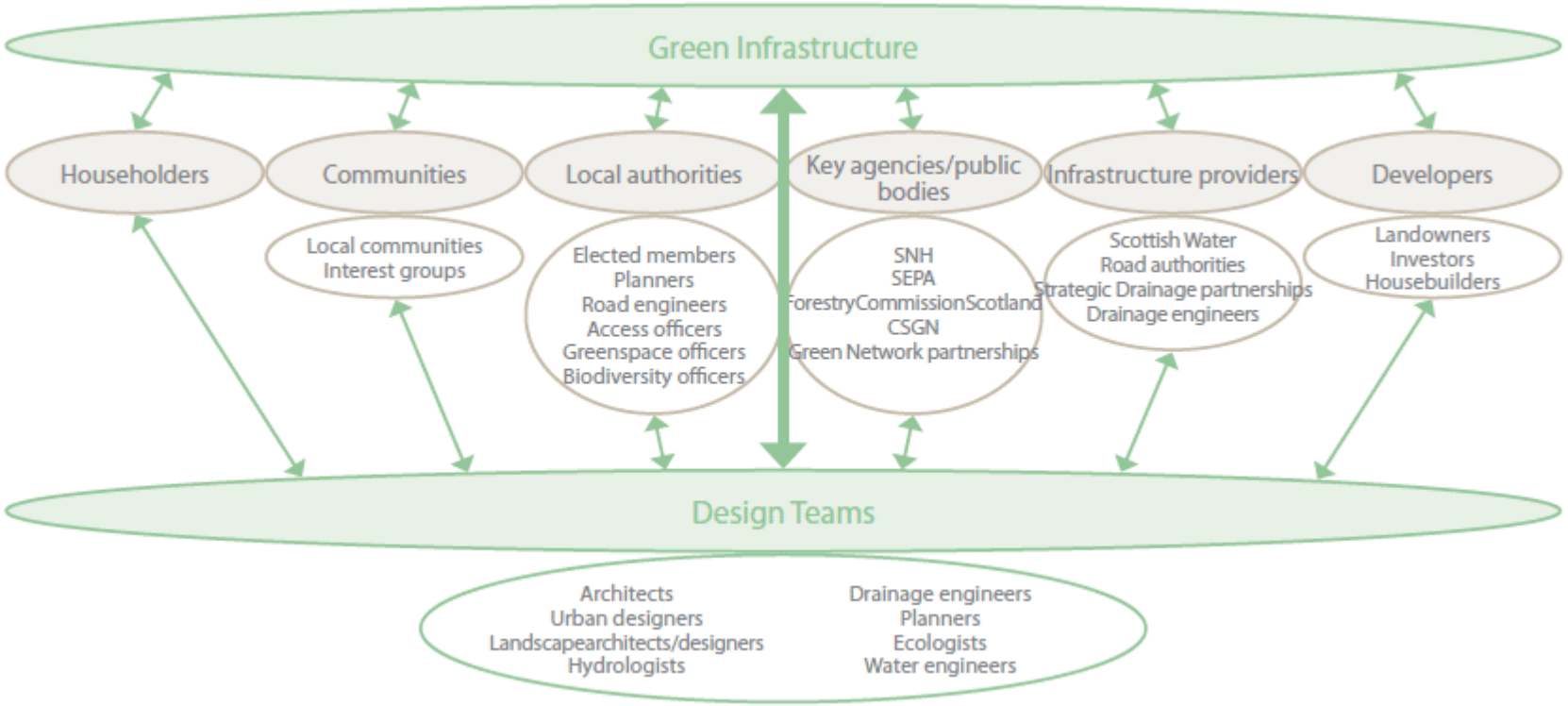
	settings • making it cheaper and easier to deal with surface water by keeping it on the surface • saving energy and money for residents and end users
Quality of place and place competitiveness	• reinforcing the local landscape character • making places more beautiful, interesting and distinctive • giving places character and a strong identity

2.4 Delivering Green Infrastructure and Green Networks in Partnership

Everyone can play their part in delivering green infrastructure. From householders looking to retro-fit their home with elements of green infrastructure such as a roof garden, to community groups getting together to set up community gardens or allotments, through to house builders designing new sites or infrastructure and service providers looking at ways to deal with flooding. Green infrastructure thinking spans the public sector (local authorities, government agencies), the private sector (landowners, developers), the third sector and communities.

A collaborative multi-disciplinary approach offers great benefits in developing an integrated solution that will work on the ground, drawing upon different specialisms and areas of expertise, on a partnership basis.

Equally important is seeking input from local communities to tap into their local knowledge and give them a chance to shape the design. Communities can offer useful input of what existing green infrastructure should be kept, the best places for new connections, routes and linkages, and what new additions they would like in their area, be it allotments, cycle routes, parks or wildlife havens. This can help foster community pride in the place.



2.5 Policy Context

2.5.1 Scottish Policy Context

Open Space has a key role in delivering outputs across a breadth of environmental, social and economic goals linking to cross-cutting themes in both the Community Plan and Development Plan. The issue is increasing in importance as we move forward in addressing the challenges of:

- Environmental Sustainability;
- Health and healthier lifestyles;

- Inclusion & social equity;
- Sustainable economic growth; and
- Quality of place and place competitiveness.

A common component of these initiatives is the commitment of the Scottish Government to a more sustainable future linked strongly to economic, social and environmental development based on the principles of social justice and equal opportunity for all of Scotland's communities. Open spaces are a critical component in promoting and developing quality in both urban and rural settlements. Equally importantly it needs to deliver real and meaningful benefits to communities that address local needs in a manner that offers 'best value'.

Planning Advice Note 65 – Planning and Open Space and National Planning Framework 4 highlight the importance and value placed by the Scottish Government on open spaces as a critical component in promoting and developing quality in both urban and rural settlements.

Open space, its protection, enhancement and management is recognised as requiring further consideration by local authorities and a more strategic approach recommended to ensure its continued contribution to the development of sustainable settlements. PAN 65 sets out how local authorities should prepare open space strategies and gives examples of good practice in providing, managing and maintaining open spaces.

2.5.2 PAN 65 Planning and Open Space

Planning Advice Note 65 sets out the objective of demonstrating to local authorities the value and approach to preparing open space audits and strategies. The PAN gives advice on the value of the planning system in protecting and enhancing existing open spaces and providing high quality new spaces. PAN 65 states that:

> *'Open spaces are important for our quality of life. They provide the setting for a wide range of social interactions and pursuits that support personal and community well-being. They allow individuals to interact with the natural environment and provide habitats for wildlife. They can also important in defining the character and identity of settlements.*
>
> *New areas of open space of enduring quality and value have, however, been the exception rather than the rule and existing spaces are under pressure not just from physical development but also from poor management and maintenance.'*
>
> *'…valuable spaces, particularly green spaces, continue to be lost to development through a piecemeal approach and, in some case in pursuit of capital receipts. Lack of awareness and recognition about the type, function and quality of spaces in the local area has led to a reliance on simplistic quantitative standards. Without a long-term strategy, incremental planning and land disposal decisions can cumulatively erode*

environment quality. Spaces should not be allowed to deteriorate through inadequate management, nor should poor maintenance regimes provide justification for the disposal of open space for development.'

The planning system performs two key functions in relation to open space:

- Protecting areas that are valuable and valued; and
- Ensuring provision of appropriate quality in, or within easy reach of, new development.

It should be recognised that open spaces form only part of a much wider spectrum of land usage. PAN 65 Planning and Open Space defines open space as 'any vegetated land or structure, water or geological feature in an urban area and civic space consisting of squares, market places and other paves or hard landscaped areas with a civic function.' The table below outlines the different types of open spaces described in PAN 65.

Open Space is a 'cross cutting' issue, drawing on the policy areas of sustainable development, healthy living, environmental education, local climate variances, recreational access, biodiversity, cultural resources and social inclusion. A wide range of initiatives arising from such policies can benefit from well-designed, well-operated and well maintained open space.

A key element in planning open space provision is the matching of local needs to local provision to ensure equal access opportunity across communities to the varied components parts (parks/amenity open space / play provision / sports areas / green corridors etc.).

Local authorities should aim to maintain or form networks of green and civic spaces which are:

- Well located – linking into the open space network, connecting into well-used routes and overlooked by buildings, helping to foster a feeling of safety and discourage anti-social behaviour as well as being easily accessible to all;
- Well designed – designed to reduce vandalism and where appropriate, maintenance, with the use of high quality durable materials and incorporating elements of interest, for example, through public art;
- Well managed – covered by a management and maintenance regime attuned to the type of space, durability, wildlife present, level of usage and local interests;
- Adaptable – be capable of serving a number of functions and adapting to different uses while promoting a range of benefits such as biodiversity, flood control or environmental education.

Type	Description
Public parks and gardens	Areas of land normally enclosed, designed, constructed, managed and maintained as a public park or garden. These may be owned or managed by community groups.
Private gardens or grounds	Areas of land normally enclosed and associated with a house or institution and reserved for private use.
Amenity greenspace	Landscaped areas providing visual amenity or separating different buildings or land uses for environmental, visual or safety reasons and used for a variety of informal or social activities such as sunbathing, picnics or kickabouts.
Play space for children and teenagers	Areas providing safe and accessible opportunities for children's play, usually linked to housing areas.
Sports areas	Large and generally flat areas of grassland or specially designed surfaces, used primarily for designated sports (including playing fields, golf courses, tennis courts and bowling greens) and which are generally bookable.
Green corridors	Routes including canals, river corridors and old railway lines, linking different areas within a town or city as part of a designated and managed network and used for walking, cycling or horse riding, or linking towns and cities to their surrounding countryside or country parks. These may link green spaces together.
Natural/semi-natural greenspaces	Areas of undeveloped or previously developed land with residual natural habitats or which have been planted or colonised by vegetation and wildlife, including woodland and wetland areas.

Allotments and community growing spaces	Areas of land for growing fruit, vegetables and other plants, either in individual allotments or as a community activity.
Civic space	Squares, streets and waterfront promenades, predominantly of hard landscaping that provide a focus for pedestrian activity and can make connections for people and for wildlife.
Burial grounds	Includes churchyards and cemeteries.
Other functional greenspace	May be one or more types as required by local circumstances or priorities.

2.5.3 Local Policy Context

Building on the importance placed on Open Space at a national policy level, a number of key documents within the East Ayrshire area refer to Open Space.

- Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan – Growing a Sustainable Ayrshire (approved November 2007);
- East Ayrshire Local Development
- East Ayrshire Community Plan
- Core Path Plan.
- Community Led Action Plans

Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan – Growing a Sustainable Ayrshire (approved November 2007).
This Structure Plan provides the strategic framework for the development of Ayrshire to 2025. Open Space (for both recreation and amenity purposes) is listed in this document as being a guiding principal for achieving sustainable development. This document recognises that existing Open Space needs to be protected against inappropriate development in order to ensure that the vitality of the area is maintained.

East Ayrshire Local Development Plan
The East Ayrshire Local Development Plan has a number of policies referring to Open Space; in terms of enhancing existing provision, improving access, protection existing areas of Open Space in respect of both quality and quantity and the provision of Open Space in new residential development. There are not any specific policies regarding Cemeteries in the Local Plan at this stage.

East Ayrshire Community Plan
The East Ayrshire Community Plan is the sovereign and overarching planning document for the East Ayrshire area, providing the strategic policy framework for the delivery of public services by all partners. This document has been produced by a number of key agencies, including East Ayrshire Council. The document recognises that there are many existing examples of high quality open space within the area, and that good quality Open Space contributes to the wellbeing of residents within their surroundings. This non-statutory document provides guidance on how the local East Ayrshire community wishes to develop, and as such should be read in conjunction with the Local Development Plan and Green Infrastructure Strategy.

Through the Community plan, the Council is committed to protecting and improving the quality of our natural and physical environment to ensure that we preserve what is best about our area for future generations.

The Green Infrastructure and Green Network Strategy is one of a range of different policies and strategies to guide future developments to ensure that they are complementary to our existing natural and physical assets.

Core Path Plan
The Open Space Strategy has cross referred to some of the potential core path areas with a view to improving access and links between open spaces and creation of green networks.

2.5.4 Greenspace Scotland
Greenspace Scotland's recently published report called 'Making the Links', states that:

'Greenspaces are the 'green lungs' of our towns and cities. The contribute to our physical health by providing places for informal recreation – walking, cycling, sitting, socialising and children's play, and to our mental health by providing 'breathing spaces' where we can take time out from the stresses of modern life.

Greenspaces bring the countryside into our towns and cities, making it accessible from our 'backdoor'. They help to make neighbourhoods attractive places where people want to live and work.

Greenspaces help community cohesion, stimulate the economy and attract enterprise. They encourage biodiversity and provide opportunities for learning.'

Greenspace Quality – A Guide to Assessment, Planning and Strategic Development

Greenspace Scotland produced this document to assist this involved in green space planning to share and better understand best practice in developing a co-ordinated approach to green space provision based on a Green Space Strategy.

Ayrshire Green Space Mapping

The Ayrshire Green Space Mapping report was undertaken by Greenspace Scotland in 2007 and included the mapping of green space within North, South and East Ayrshire. This project forms part of a national initiative lead by Greenspace Scotland to create a digital greenspace map across all Scottish local authorities. The definition of open space in respect of this work is 'any vegetated land or water within or adjoining urban area'. This work combines mapping of all PAN65 category open space and in addition spaces adjacent to roads, water, paths, buildings and other areas of land. This guidance ensures that a comprehensive and consistent approach is taken when creating GIS based maps of green networks.

3. Setting Standards

3.1 Assessment of Open Space

The Green Infrastructure and Green Network Strategy has been informed by a detailed audit of green infrastructure/open space and sports pitches within each settlement in East Ayrshire throughout 2014. The audit has focused on the quality of green infrastructure/open space, the demand for the different types of green infrastructure/open space defined within PAN 65: Planning and Open Space, and whether each settlement has a deficit or surplus in the provision of green infrastructure/open space overall. The review discovered that within East Ayrshire's settlements the demand/need for green infrastructure/open space is not the same. This is particularly apparent for sports pitches and playing fields, where recent significant investment has been made in high quality floodlit synthetic grass pitches within the 'Hub' communities.

The strategy has detailed that private open space/garden ground should also be included within new residential development.

3.1.1 Surplus, Deficits and Accessibility of Open Space within Settlements

The review and audit focused on quantity, quality and accessibility of green infrastructure/open space within settlements. Site assessment criteria were developed to determine the quality and accessibility of existing green infrastructure/open spaces. This locally adopted assessment methodology is based on the Greenspace Scotland's quality guide and Local Environmental Audit and Management System (LEAMS). The assessment methodology is provided in detail within Volume 2 of this strategy and has focused on:

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

This approach allowed the review to assess and score each type of green infrastructure/open space within the settlement concerned. The scoring of the open space has enabled the Green Infrastructure and Green Network Strategy to determine if there is a deficit or surplus of quality green infrastructure/open space within each settlement based on the PAN 65 typologies as set out in paragraph 2.5.2.

Although there may be green infrastructure/open space close to people, not all of the types of green infrastructure/open space identified in PAN 65 are deemed to be useable. This could be due to their characteristics or size or they may not be accessible to all. Therefore, an accessibility standard for green infrastructure/open space is required to ensure that all members of the public, regardless of ability, have access to quality green infrastructure/open spaces. The **accessibility standard for East Ayrshire applies to areas of no less than 0.2 hectares** which fall into one of the following typologies:

Parks and Public Gardens
Amenity Green Space
Natural / Semi Natural Greenspace
Sports pitches, playing fields and play space for children
Cemeteries

International research into the impacts of green infrastructure/open space and health and on wider quality of life strongly indicates the benefits for health and quality of life where green infrastructure/open space is located within a 5 minute walk. 250m 'door to space' is deemed to provide a 5 minute walk.

3.1.2 Summary Results of Open Space within each Settlement

The Settlement Reviews included in Volume 2 of this Strategy provide more detail on the assessment and scoring of the green infrastructure/open space within each settlement. However, a summary of the settlement review findings, in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility of green infrastructure/open space, is provided below:

Settlement	**Quantity** **Surplus (+) / Deficit (-)**				**Quality** **% of total area of open space which falls into one of the 3 assessment score brackets**			**Accessibility** **Meets previous 150m accessibility standard (Y/N)**
	Total area of greenspace	**Recommended greenspace**	**Quality greenspace**	**(+) or (-)**	**Area of openspace which is below the 50 % quality score based on the open space audit**	**Area of open space which has a quality score between 50% - 80% based on the open space audit**	**Area of open space which has a quality score of over 80% based on the open space audit**	
Auchinleck	70.5	20	39	(+)	44%	54%	2%	N
Catrine	23	10	20.5	(+)	11%	89%	0%	N
Crosshouse, Knockentiber, Gatehead	14	15.2	13.2	(-)	6%	94%	0%	N
Cumnock	158	64	104	(+)	34%	66%	0%	Y
Dalmellington, Burnton, Bellsbank	62	15.7	27.9	(+)	55%	45%	0%	Y
Dalrymple	3.4	3.2	3.1	(-)	8%	92%	0%	Y

Darvel, Priestland	15.1	18	9.9	(-)	34%	66%	0%	N
Drongan	7.8	15.6	3.3	(-)	58%	42%	0%	N
Dunlop, Lugton	20	5.5	20	(+)	0%	88%	12%	N
Fenwick, Waterside, Moscow	2.4	6.6	2.4	(-)	0%	8%	92%	N
Galston	32	26	29.4	(+)	8%	90%	2%	Y
Hurlford, Crookedholm	14.7	21.9	8.1	(-)	45%	55%	0%	N
Kilmarnock	375	250	360	(+)	4%	68%	28%	N
Kilmaurs	7.3	13.6	3.7	(-)	49%	51%	0%	N
Lugar, Logan, Cronberry	20.5	18	7.6	(-)	63%	37%	0%	N
Mauchline	16.5	22	10.7	(-)	35%	65%	0%	N
Muirkirk	49	9	25.5	(+)	48%	52%	0%	N
New Cumnock	48	16	32	(+)	33%	67%	0%	Y
Newmilns	9.5	16	9.5	(-)	0%	100%	0%	N
Ochiltree	5.4	3.6	0.8	(-)	85%	15%	0%	N
Patna, Waterside, Polnessan	64	11	43.5	(+)	32%	68%	0%	Y
Rankinston, Sinclairston, Skares,	2.2	1.8	2.2	(+)	0%	100%	0%	Y

Hayhill								
Sorn	9	1.5	8.1	(+)	10%	86%	4%	Y
Stewarton	37.5	34	36	(+)	4%	69%	27%	N
EAST AYRSHIRE	**1067**	**821**	**561**	**(-)**				

On a local authority wide level, East Ayrshire Council appears to have a surplus of open space. However, only 561 hectares has scored above 50% in the quality assessment. Based on the quality open space as a percentage of recommended open space per capita, only 68.3% of the open space across East Ayrshire meets the desired quality threshold.

3.2 Setting Standards for the Provision of Open Space

3.2.1 Settlement Green Infrastructure/Open Space Standards

The purpose of this section is to set out the requirements for green infrastructure/open space provision within settlements. From the assessment of open space within East Ayrshire's settlements and taking account of the quantity and quality of existing green infrastructure/open space, the demand for green infrastructure/open space and the deficits and surpluses of green infrastructure/open space within each settlement, a recommended standard has been established, which equates to **5.2 hectares of quality and accessible green infrastructure/open space per 1000 population.** The table below details how this overarching green infrastructure/open space standard has been arrived at:

Table 1: Settlement Green Infrastructure/Open Space Quantitative Standards

PAN 65 Typology	Quantitative Standard
Public Parks and Gardens	2.4 hectares per 1000 population
Natural / Semi Natural Greenspace	0.4 hectares per 1000 population
Sports pitches / playing fields / Recreational Play Space	1.9 hectares per 1000 population
Amenity Green Space including cemeteries	0.5 hectares per 1000 population

These overall standards will be delivered through the creation of new green infrastructure/open space by developers, East Ayrshire Council, East Ayrshire Leisure, East Ayrshire Woodlands and other stakeholders.

3.2.2 Requirement for Public Open Space within New Developments

New developments are required to provide at least the minimum standards of green infrastructure/open space within their developments. This requirement will help to contribute to the Settlement Green Infrastructure/Open Space standards and also towards improving the quality of places. The minimum standards will also help to address deficiencies within certain settlements. However, it is recognised that the deficiencies are historic and not the sole responsibility of new developments to address in full. Nevertheless, new development should not result in additional green infrastructure/open space deficiencies.

The table below sets out the minimum standards of green infrastructure/open space that will be required for new developments.

Table 2: Quantity Standards for Green Infrastructure/Open Space within new developments

Development Type	Development Criteria	Minimum Quantitative Standard
Retail and Leisure Parks	Over 5 hectares in area or have a gross floor area of more than 10,000 square metres	12 square metres of amenity, natural and recreational space per 100 square metres of gross floor area
Business Parks	Over 5 hectares in area or have a gross floor area of more than 10,000 square metres	9 square metres of amenity, natural and recreational space per 100 square metres of gross floor area
Industry and Distribution Parks	Over 5 hectares in area or have a gross floor area of more than 10,000 square metres	6 square metres of amenity, natural and recreational space per 100 square metres of gross floor area

Residential	Developments of between 10 and 200 housing units or a development area of greater than 0.5 hectares	38 square meters per household or 0.2 hectares of recreational open space whichever is the greater 20 square metres per household of amenity and natural open space
Residential	Developments comprising more than 200 housing units	63 square metres of maintained recreational open space (including larger equipped play areas) and playing fields per household 20 square metres per household of maintained amenity and natural open space

Recreational Open Space is defined as equipped play areas, play parks, public parks and gardens, outdoor sports facilities (such as green gyms), sports pitches etc.

Amenity Open Space is defined as natural and semi-natural greenspaces, green corridors, informal recreation spaces, green spaces in and around houses (not including garden ground), greens, allotments, cemeteries, and civic spaces.

3.3 Implementation of Recreational Open Space Standards for Residential Development

The implementation of the green infrastructure/open space standards for residential development will be subject to a four stage process in order to ensure that the most appropriate solutions to address the impact of new development on green infrastructure/open spaces within a settlement are delivered. This approach has been derived for the review of quality, quantity and accessibility standards and the settlement reviews in Volume 2 to determine what impact development will have on the existing recreational green infrastructure/open spaces. **The four stage process is only applicable to residential sites providing 10 to 200 houses.**

The four stage process is set out below.

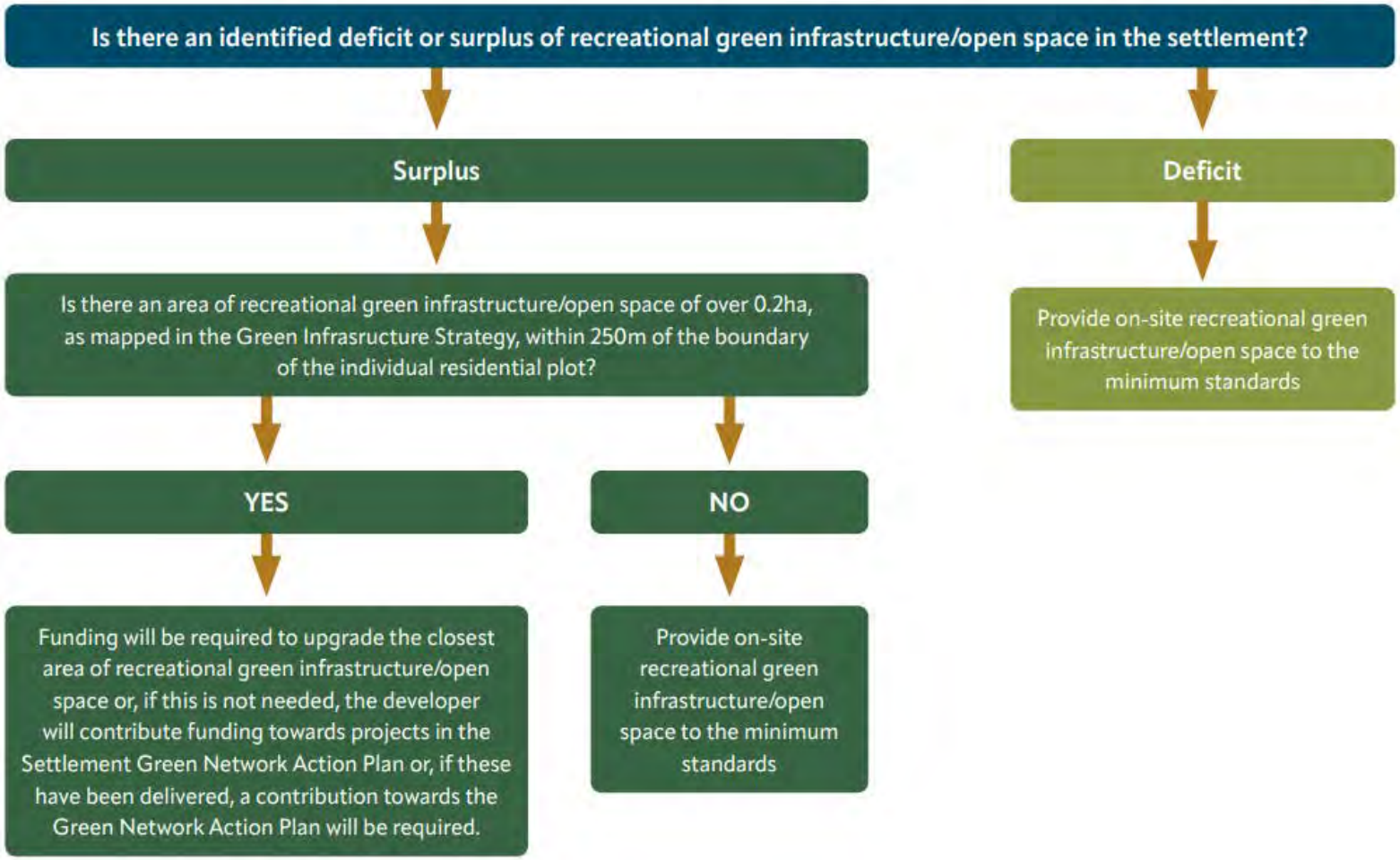
The first step will be to look at the quantity of recreational green infrastructure/open space within each settlement. If there is a deficit of recreational green infrastructure/open space within the settlement, the developer will be asked to provide a quality recreational open space within the development as per the minimum standards for residential development. If there is a surplus of recreational green infrastructure/open space within the settlement, the developer will be asked to contribute to one of the next stages in this approach.

If there is a surplus of recreational green infrastructure/open space within the settlement, the developer will be asked to contribute to improving the quality of recreational green infrastructure/open space of 0.2ha or more within 250m of the development site. If there isn't a quality recreational green infrastructure/open space of 0.2ha or more within 250m of the development site, the developer will be asked to create one as part of their development.

If the recreational green infrastructure/open space of 0.2ha or more is within 250m of the development site and it does not require to be upgraded, then the developer will be asked to contribute to the implementation of the Settlement Green Network Action Plan (Volume 2).

Finally, if all of the actions within the Settlement Green Network Action Plan have been delivered then a contribution will be made to the Hub Green Network Action Plan.

The simple flow chart presented below illustrates the process for residential sites providing 10 to 200 houses.



All developments of 200 residential units or more will be required to provide the minimum standard for recreational green infrastructure/open space on site, as these larger sites will undoubtedly bring greater pressure on existing recreational green infrastructure/open space resources and potentially exacerbate deficiencies within existing settlements. Furthermore, in order to meet good standards of design and create a sense of place, it will not be acceptable for residential development sites of this scale not to provide well located, recreational green infrastructure/open space on site to at least the minimum standard for residents to use.

3.4 Residential Amenity Open Space Standards

All developments will be required to provide 20 square metres per household of amenity open space within the development. As defined in paragraph 3.3.2, amenity open space can consist of the following: natural and semi-natural greenspaces, green corridors, informal recreation spaces, green spaces in and around houses, greens, allotments, cemeteries, and civic spaces.

This requirement is necessary in terms of the design of the development, creating a sense of place and also to serve the residents of the development.

3.5 Residential Private Open Space Standards

Private Open Space comprises all land within the curtilage of a dwelling house with the exception of land occupied by driveways, garages or parking spaces. The private open space standards 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 and semi-detached house	100 square metres or 1.5 x ground floor area of the house (whichever is greater)
Terraced house	70 square metres or 1.5 x ground floor area of the house (whichever is greater)
Flats	25 square metres per bedroom
Nursing Homes	15 square metres per bed space

Special Needs Housing	25 square metres per 1 bedroom unit and 40 square metres per 2 bedroom unit

4. Settlement Reviews and Action Plans

4.1 Volume 2

Volume 2 of the East Ayrshire Green Infrastructure and Green Network Strategy outlines the findings of the openspace audit which was carried out using the locally developed assessment system and analyses the open space provision in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility. For each settlement, this information has been used along with information gathered through the development of Community Led Action Plans, the Core Path plan and other local priorities to develop individual settlement Green Network Action Plans. These plans include actions that can be delivered in the short term, medium term and long term.

5. Strategic Recommendations

5.1 Improvement and Enhancement of Existing Provision

As a priority, all sites identified in the East Ayrshire Open Space Audit 2014 as having particular problems or issues and/or with potential for open space use should be listed and a planned programme of improvements and enhancements developed. In improving existing provision, particular emphasis to be placed on conserving, developing and enhancing the pre-existing features of the natural environment. Other issues that should be addressed in relation to the existing open space provision include:

- All areas identified as casual open space to be reviewed to establish if anything should be done to enhance their use. The use of spatial zoning is recommended to create spaces for different, and sometimes conflicting activities, such as wildlife/ecological areas and activities;
- To encourage and promote sharing of facilities and resources, particularly community use of school pitches and use of public open space;
- It will be important to safeguard small neighbourhood open spaces from encroaching development such as garden extensions and driveways. Many of the neighbourhood spaces are described in the settlement review with specific recommendations and enhancements;
- The development of Design and Management Plans for larger public parks which contain a range of facilities and landscape features requiring protection and improvement;
- Many of the open spaces within communities are owned and managed by private organisations. A method statement and maintenance schedule to cover management techniques is required to ensure a composite approach to management and maintenance of open spaces dependant on typology and size. There needs to be a 10 year maintenance programme included and implemented.

- All arboriculture interests should be considered in the long term management of open spaces. This would include Woodland Management Plans and surveys as well as consideration of Tree Preservation Orders;
- Long term management plan for areas of woodland out with settlements including the Forestry Commission sites;
- The importance of community support and involvement of open spaces is paramount to this plan. It is also important that East Ayrshire Council supports communities in developing their own projects.
- The importance of promoting and encouraging the use of open space for play and exploration
- Allotments and community gardens are valuable green spaces and community assets that can help improve people's quality of life by promoting healthy food, exercise and community interaction. Public interest in allotments has undergone a recent revival in line with current thinking on healthy eating, organic food and exercise. This has created a greater demand for allotments in some areas, which is critical to protecting them from a change of use in the future as a consequence of disuse or dereliction. The Scottish Government's aim is to ensure that allotments are well managed, are considered as part of the overall green infrastructure, and are only disposed of where there is no demand for them and established criteria have been met.

  East Ayrshire Council will protect existing allotments and community gardens and support the development of allotments and community gardens as part of sustainability and healthy living initiatives. The Council will investigate the latent demand for allotments and community gardens and will review the Allotment Framework.

5.2 Management and Maintenance

Management and maintenance will be essential to the quality of open space in future years and should consider the changing usage and needs of open space, the overall protection of amenity value, biodiversity whilst encouraging recreation. Method statements and 10 year maintenance programmes will be required by all developers and open space owners.

5.3 Promoting Biodiversity

East Ayrshire boasts a range of habitats from the red sandstone gorges at Ballochmyle to the southern uplands of the Loch Doon area and the diversity of these habitats supports an amazing range of species. It has internationally notable sites including the Muirkirk and North Lowther Uplands known for its wealth of upland birds and plants. East Ayrshire is home to animals from the Hen Harrier through to the Arctic Char with a rich variety of species in between.

While the value of activities such as tourism and recreation for the economic development of the area is recognised, it is essential that we continue to protect the quality of the landscape so that this and future generations can enjoy the rich and diverse habitats and species which exist in East Ayrshire today.

The audit survey process considered biodiversity issues as a key characteristic within the survey of open space and recommendations have given due consideration to the key aims of the Ayrshire Local Biodiversity Plan (LBAP). This strategy addresses both enhancement and educational/promotion measures to provide appropriate management as well as raising the profile of local habitats.

Within the Ayrshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan, the urban environment is a key habitat. Many of the actions that are outlined in the Habitat Action Plan for the urban habitats have been integrated into the settlement Green Network Actions Plans and the Strategic Action Plan within this document.

Volume 4 of this Strategy outlines East Ayrshire Council's commitment to integration and delivery of biodiversity during the period 2015 – 2017.

5.4 Community Led Action Plans

Focussing on empowering and building the capacity of local people and communities and developing strong social networks, East Ayrshire Council has established a new service which provides a single point of contact through a 'community enabler' to help people to engage with Council and partner services. Specifically, in communities there will be a focus upon identifying local assets, bringing together local groups, associations, communities of interest and organisations, prioritising action through local surveys and consultation and planning for change.

Work is already underway to support the development of locally led action plans in every one of East Ayrshire's communities over the next three years. This approach underpins the Council's aspiration to transform the relationship with the communities in the area, ensuring that communities are empowered to plan, prioritise and progress community led regeneration in their area.

Community led action plans that have been developed in communities so far have produced key outcomes including the following:

- More people wanting to take part in shaping the future of their community
- Changing and more sophisticated leadership within communities
- Communities shifting from being reactive to proactive

- Communities becoming partners in their own development
- A wide range of community projects and initiatives
- A greater ability for communities to partner with public agencies to deliver services
- Increased membership of existing local groups
- Creation of new community organisations
- Increased local capacity to develop and manage community projects

5.5 Sports Pitch Strategy

The primary function of sports pitches is to provide an arena for formal recreation activities such as team sports. In addition, sports pitches can also provide informal recreation opportunities and are an important green space in settlements with limited open space. They also have a dual role as an amenity area that may also have links to other green networks and the wider countryside. Pitches occupy a significant amount of land in settlements and can play an important role in contributing to local identity or character, especially if the pitches are used on an annual basis for galas or events. Most towns have a pitch or recreation ground depending on the size of the settlement. These can be a key space within a town or village or conversely an underused resource with limited amenity value, depending on the management of the space. It follows then that sports pitches have to be properly managed and maintained to provide the full value of the benefits to the local community. A sports pitch review was undertaken in 2012 and will play a valuable role in addressing the sports pitches of East Ayrshire in a strategic manner, to ensure that residents can benefit from the amenity value of sports pitches within East Ayrshire.

East Ayrshire Council's Sports Pitch Review relates to the Open Space strategy published in early 2009 by East Ayrshire Council. The council commissioned ENTEC to audit and survey open space sites, including sports pitches throughout East Ayrshire. The need to revise the original document was due to the progress being made with regard to sports pitches in East Ayrshire. The PPP facilities at Grange and St Joseph's academies now offer the public access to two floodlit synthetic grass pitches that were not available at the time the original Pitch Review was produced. Other facilities have also been developed at Bellfield, Auchinleck, Galston and Dalmellington since the 2009 report was prepared.

Assessing the demand for pitch sport facilities is a matter of identifying existing levels of usage and gauging the extent to which demand is constrained by lack of or poor quality facilities. The forecasting of sports initiatives and impacts of demographic changes are also important

factors to consider. Collated evidence as part of the audit process and from information provided by the Scottish FA and Scottish Youth Football Association indicates that there is a general decline in the demand for football pitches with an increasing shift towards provision of synthetic grass pitches at all levels. The area's only Scottish Premier League Team, Kilmarnock FC has also installed a synthetic grass pitch within their grounds at Rugby Park, Kilmarnock. With this in mind, the standards set out in the 2009 open space strategy are no longer deemed appropriate. Therefore, as outlined previously, playing fields now make up part of the overall green network and open space provision for each settlement.

5.6 Cemetery Strategy

Cemeteries and graveyards are essential elements within the open space provision of the area. Although the primary purpose of this type of open space is for burial of the dead and quiet contemplation, these sites frequently also have considerable value for the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity. Several cemeteries and churchyards are recognised as being of significant value in terms of biodiversity and conservation. Some churchyards retain areas of unimproved grasslands and various other habitats. They can make a significant contribution to the provision of urban greenspace sometimes providing a sanctuary for wildlife in the urban settlements and often providing historic value to the more rural landscapes. Cemeteries and churchyards are also important in a historical context.

A separate Cemetery Strategy for East Ayrshire is included in Volume 3 of this document. The aims of the Cemetery Strategy are to provide, as far as is possible, a clear vision for the future development of cemetery services across East Ayrshire for a 10 year period. The Cemetery Strategy will continue to form part of the East Ayrshire's overall Green Network and Green Infrastructure Strategy and will reflect the value of these public spaces in their own right as well as their provision of a specific service (burial ground) and the likely changing patterns of community expectations.

5.7 Allotment and Community Gardens

Allotment gardens play a unique role within communities, facilitating the delivery of sustainable, wide ranging benefits through hands on cultivation and food awareness. Allotments provide opportunities to socialise, exercise and harvest fresh fruit and vegetables that benefit healthy living, active lifestyles, and help promote social inclusion and support local biodiversity and nature conservation. The potential of allotments to support such benefits has been recognised at both a national and local level in Scottish Government policy.

5.8 Central Scotland Green Network

The Central Scotland Green Network Trust (CSGNT) was established in March 2014. It was created to provide capacity to help realise the Vision for the Central Scotland Green Network. Its role and activities are intended to be complementary to, and supportive of, the wider CSGN network. CSGNT seeks to:

- Drive forward and coordinate the delivery of the CSGN
- Raise awareness of, and participation in, the CSGN
- Provide support and capacity to others delivering the CSGN
- Identify spatial and thematic needs to help target resources
- Directly deliver with stakeholders projects on the ground

In Ayrshire a separate Partnership was established to link into the CSGN and aims to enhance the quality of the built and natural environment for the benefit of the economy, society and nature. This will be achieved by:

- Creating high quality landscape environments for business
- Increasing woodland cover
- Restoring and enhancing ecosystem services
- Creating attractive, well maintained green spaces and improving access
- Increasing opportunities for communities to improve health and wellbeing through physical activity, active travel routes and enjoying nature

5.9 Ayrshire and Arran Forest and Woodland Strategy

Protection of woodland and trees within open spaces and public realm should be a key long term management task in relation to open spaces within East Ayrshire. Trees are an important part of the amenity and biodiversity of any green space and a detailed tree/woodland strategy should be developed for each settlement which should include the consideration of existing and new Tree Preservation Orders. Consideration of the emerging community woodlands as new recreational/nature areas on the periphery of settlements should also be considered through a long term woodland management plan.

In 2014, the new Ayrshire and Arran Forestry and Woodland Strategy was launched, which could see 3 million more trees planted in Ayrshire and Arran. The innovative strategy has been developed by the Ayrshire Green Network Partnership (AGNP), a joint initiative between Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS), Scottish Natural Heritage, South Ayrshire Council, East Ayrshire Council and North Ayrshire Council, set up to deliver the shared goals and vision of the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) with a regional focus to deliver local priorities in the Ayrshire area. The strategy is intended to guide woodland management and expansion in Ayrshire and Arran, providing a policy and spatial framework to maximise the contribution of woodland and forestry to the people, environment and economy of the region.

5.10 Neighbourhood Spaces

Each settlement has a considerably high proportion of small open spaces usually consisting of areas of maintained grass, which are predominantly less than 0.2 hectares. Some of these areas will provide value and usage potential which will vary depending on size, location and the type of settlement they are located in. These spaces may require protection and enhancement and could hold potential to improve the amenity and townscape of settlements.

5.11 Privately Owned Open Space

Management and maintenance issues will arise in relation to non-council owned open space. The council will work with other landowners and stakeholders to ensure appropriate maintenance either through arrangements with third parties or taking over maintenance themselves. Production of management method statements that other parties could utilise would help to adopt composite maintenance techniques for the appropriate open typology and size.

5.12 Climate Change

Many open spaces located within flood plains and close to watercourses may come under pressure from rising water levels and increased rainfall. This will lead to new features and flood defence elements and possible redesign and re-evaluation of open space typologies.

5.13 Landscape Partnership Scheme

In response to various local and regional pressures and challenges, East Ayrshire Council, East Ayrshire Leisure and various local, regional and community partners are developing a Landscape Partnership Scheme to be delivered between 2016 and 2021. Landscapes are an important part of our past and play an important part in our lives today. That's why we want to help conserve them and get more people involved in understanding and looking after them for the long term. Landscape Partnership Schemes put heritage conservation at the heart of rural and peri-urban regeneration. Local, regional and national organisations work together to make a real difference to landscapes and communities for

the long term. They do this by conserving habitats at landscape-scale, promoting joined-up management and reviving long-lost skills through the development of a portfolio of projects and a formal partnership agreement. An inaugural meeting of the East Ayrshire Landscape Partnership Scheme was held on 11th February 2015.

5.14 Outdoor Learning and Outdoor Play

The Curriculum for Excellence is an innovative approach to learning which gives a vision for Scotland that encourages our children and young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. The outdoor environment has massive potential for learning. In East Ayrshire, we are extremely fortunate to have such rich urban and rural environments on our doorsteps and our children and young people's learning experiences can be enhanced by maximising the potential of the outdoors. The Scottish Government is keen to see all our children and young people have positive learning experiences in a variety of settings.

Outdoor learning experiences are often remembered for a lifetime. Integrating learning and outdoor experiences, whether through play, outdoor learning or adventures further afield, provides relevance and depth to the curriculum in ways that are difficult to achieve indoors.

Outdoor learning contributes to delivering the Scottish Government's overarching strategic objectives towards 'creating a more successful country':

Smarter – Outdoor learning encourages learners to understand the interplay and relationship between curriculum areas. This awareness promotes lifelong learning and develops critical thinking skills.

Healthier – Learning outdoors can lead to lifelong recreation. Activities such as walking and cycling which are ideal for physical and emotional wellbeing contribute to a healthier Scotland. Scots have a reputation for adventure activities such as mountaineering and have achieved international sporting success in canoeing, sailing and skiing.

Safer and stronger – Outdoor learning activities span social divisions and can help build stronger communities. Some organisations have therapeutic programmes where outdoor learning plays a central role. Children and young people have opportunities to develop skills to assess and manage risk when making decisions.

Greener – Frequent and regular outdoor learning encourages children and young people to engage with the natural and built heritage. Scotland's countryside and urban areas provide ideal settings for children and young people to understand the global significance of sustainability issues and inform personal decisions that contribute towards a greener Scotland.

Wealthier and fairer – The outdoors provides excellent opportunities to use a wide range of skills and abilities not always visible in the classroom. Becoming aware of such skills can fundamentally change personal, peer and staff perceptions and lead to profound changes in life expectations and success.

5.15 East Ayrshire Strategic Action Plan

The following table outlines the actions that should take place across East Ayrshire on a short, medium and long term basis. These actions are not specific to any particular settlement. Throughout East Ayrshire, Green Networks will not be delivered by one organisation or partnership. The Strategy provides us with a range of delivery mechanisms to ensure a sustainable and planned network of green spaces and interconnected links which are designed, developed and managed to meet the environmental, social and economic needs of the area. The actions within the Green Network Plan will be delivered through local and regional partnerships as well as through the implementation of the Local Development Plan.

Action No.	Action	Short Term (1-5 years)	Medium term (5-10 years)	Long term (10+ years)
GN1	Development of a neighbourhood spaces plan to safeguard small neighbourhood open spaces (below 0.2 hectares) from encroaching development such as garden extensions and driveways.		x	x
GN2	The development of Design and Management Plans for larger public parks which contain a range of facilities and landscape features requiring protection and improvement;	x		
GN3	Development of method statements and implemented maintenance programmes by all privately owned spaces to cover management techniques. This will ensure a composite approach to management and maintenance of open spaces dependant on typology and size.	x	x	x

GN4	Development of long term management plans for areas of woodland out with settlements including the Forestry Commission.		**x**	
GN5	The importance of community support and involvement of open spaces is paramount to this plan. It is also important that East Ayrshire Council supports communities in developing their own projects including those outlined in the Community Led Action Plans.	**x**		
GN6	Revision of East Ayrshire Allotment Framework to support the development of community gardens, allotments and growing areas.		**x**	
GN7	Development of a Landscape Partnership Scheme to provide greater a partnership of local, regional and national interests which aims to deliver a portfolio of projects that link community and heritage	**x**	**x**	**x**
GN8	Core Path Plan Review	**x**		
GN9	Development of an Outdoor Play Strategy for East Ayrshire which reflects the National Play Strategy for Scotland	**x**	**x**	
GN10	Carry out a review of Listed Wildlife Sites and develop an action plan for local nature reserve creation	**x**	**x**	
GN11	Develop a Gateway Strategy for East Ayrshire	**x**	**x**	

6. Monitoring

6.1 Introduction

A monitoring and evaluation framework can take a variety of forms and should reflect East Ayrshire's existing monitoring and continuous improvement systems. The monitoring process should measure outcomes and establish quality improvements as well as track trends.

6.2 Green Infrastructure and Green Network Strategy

The monitoring and evaluation of the Green Infrastructure and Green Network Strategy will be important to enable proper feedback and ensure the Strategy is a progressive document. The monitoring process should address the following issues in relation to the strategy:

- Open Space Audit;
- Future stakeholder and community engagement;
- Capital and funding programme;
- Open Space quality improvements; and
- User satisfaction.

6.2.1 Open Space Audit

The monitoring of the Open Space Audit should address the scope of audit and accessibility of information. Updating of information to ensure the work is up to date, which could include new open spaces and inclusion of other baseline data from other organisations e.g. designations and core paths should be carried out on a regular basis.

6.2.2 Engagement

Engagement with key stakeholders and community groups which will include all key agencies, (stakeholders, funders and community) will be an important part in delivery and monitoring of the open space strategy. Develop mechanisms to ensure community groups' views are heard and:

- Develop partnerships with key local agencies and organisations;
- Support community involvement in decision making;
- Facilitate the formation of, and participation in, community forums;
- Support volunteers to participate in decision making;
- Network with agencies to encourage community involvement; and
- Locate volunteering and community action at the heart of policy.

This process of involving the community within the decision making process follows the principles already set out within East Ayrshire Community Plan and through the work of Vibrant Communities.

6.2.3 Monitoring Investment Programmes

There is limited information about monitoring of the capital programme in relation to open space. The recommendations by Greenspace Scotland in relation to monitoring include:

- *Local Authority Investment*
- *Partner and stakeholder interest*
- *Voluntary and Community sector investment*

Monitoring and evaluation of operational investment and resources could address specific maintenance and management funding or extend to address wider outcomes, particularly social and voluntary sector focused outcomes and of course asset management.

6.2.4 Monitoring Quality Improvements

The information in the audit should be kept up to date every five years using the locally adopted assessment system, cross referenced to action plans within the strategy

Management and Maintenance Quality

Greenspace Scotland recommends Land Audit Management Systems (LAMS) to measure and improve the maintenance and standard of parks and open space. The benefits of this system are

- *A baseline quality standard and a monitoring system to assess improvement*
- *Independent audits by assessors from other maintenance teams*
- *Ability to extend to assess play areas and town centres*
- *Allows for comparisons of results between partner Authorities as discussions are ongoing for the wider adoption of the Best Practice tool.*

6.2.5 Monitoring and Evaluation Action Plan

The following table outlines the actions that East Ayrshire Council will be required to undertake to ensure that this strategy is a progressive strategy and is monitored, reviewed and updated on a regular programme.

Action No.	Action	Short Term (1-5 years)	Medium term (5-10 years)	Long term (10+ years)
ME1	Development of a localised LAMS database linked to GIS to improve maintenance and standard of open space and parks	x		
ME2	Development of localised accreditation mark to raise the profile of high quality open spaces	x		
ME3	5 year Protected open space audit		x	
ME4	Annual review of Action Plan	x		
ME5	5 year review of strategy		x	

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