

North East Lincolnshire Council

**Green Spaces Strategy
2016 – 2021**

INTRODUCTION

North East Lincolnshire Council's priorities are clear:

'Stronger economy and stronger communities'

To achieve this vision we need to work in new ways with partners in the public and private sectors, the voluntary and community sector, and with individuals, families and communities. We must support and enable the achievement of improved community outcomes with creativity and innovation.

We want North East Lincolnshire to be seen as an attractive place to live, work, visit and invest. We know that we have significant and exciting opportunities for investment and growth in North East Lincolnshire.

The Council's stronger economy / stronger communities priorities are underpinned by a key strategic framework comprising the following:

- health and wellbeing strategy
- economic strategy
- prevention and early intervention strategy
- financial strategy
- safeguarding

Our [outcomes framework](#) is the means by which our priorities will be translated into action and delivered, developed and achieved in conjunction with our partners across sectors. This is intended to drive a culture of evidence-based decision-making that will enable elected members to take informed key decisions, knowing the risks and the opportunities for citizens, communities and businesses. Our commissioning plan will ensure and foster clear links between the outcomes framework and the resources available to achieve them.

The framework sets out the five high level outcomes that we and our partners aspire to achieve to ensure prosperity and wellbeing for the residents of North East Lincolnshire.

The five outcomes are that all people in North East Lincolnshire will:

- Enjoy and benefit from a strong economy
- Feel safe and are safe
- Enjoy good health and well being
- Benefit from sustainable communities
- Fulfil their potential through skills and learning

North East Lincolnshire has an excellent range of quality green spaces which provide places where people of all ages can relax, play, enjoy nature and take part in recreation activities as well as sports. These green spaces greatly add to people's satisfaction with their local area and they help to bring communities together.

It is the Council's responsibility to maintain and improve the existing network of our high quality open spaces to ensure that those that live, work and visit the borough experience the wide range of positive benefits associated with health and well-being, quality of life and

cohesive communities that green and open space can provide. Green spaces are an integral and essential part of everyday life and contribute to the health and well-being of everyone living and working within the Borough of North East Lincolnshire. Research has shown that 91% of people believe that public parks and open spaces improve their quality of life (CABE & MORI 2004). Well used and maintained green spaces make a significant and valuable contribution to people's quality of life, provide spaces for wildlife and enhance the environment of our town, parishes and rural areas.

This has a direct impact, supporting the work towards the Council's health and well-being priority, where citizens enjoy good health and well-being.

Landscape and townscape - A high quality public environment makes a positive contribution to the townscape. Attractive parks, squares, gardens and other public green spaces create a pleasant and varied townscape improving the setting of the built environment. In town centres, a pleasant and well maintained environment supports a healthy economy as it attracts new businesses and workers and increases the number of people visiting retail areas.

Biodiversity and sustainability – Well designed green space contributes towards ecological diversity, support environmental sustainability and helps to counter pollutions. Within urban open space, varied habitats help to relieve the monotony of the urban landscape with different colours and sounds and help to bring the pleasures of the countryside into our towns.

This Strategy very clearly supports at least 2 the Outcomes Framework specifics:

- All people in NEL enjoy good health and well-being
- All people in NEL benefit from sustainable communities

The Need for the Green Space Strategy

The Green Spaces Strategy establishes the role the Council and its partners play in directing the management of green spaces in North East Lincolnshire and guides the future development of its parks and open spaces, making sure they continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of the community.

Existing and future open spaces should benefit the environment, enhance the quality of life for local communities and create greater civic pride. Existing, newly created or planned Green Spaces that meet the standards and objectives linked to this strategy need protecting and enhancing whilst the purpose and function of any poor quality green spaces will be subject to review. The strategy is a framework that contributes to Council functions including open spaces, planning, regeneration and transport in North East Lincolnshire. Its function is to:

- Ensure future green space allocations are appropriate to demand and to comply with local planning policy. The Strategy will recognise other plans by the Council while contributing to the Local Plan 2016
- To protect and improve North East Lincolnshire Council's accessible parks and open space.
- To provide the Council with a robust basis to assist with development decisions and negotiating planning gain.
- Help to identify ways in which parks and open spaces can be improved in a coordinated way and at the same time providing value for money.
- Provide clear objectives and direction for the planning and management of parks and open spaces.
- Ensure North East Lincolnshire's green spaces are well managed and sustainable.
- Protect and enhance green spaces for the benefit of people and wildlife.
- Provide continuity of management.

The Green Space Vision

'To ensure that every area of North East Lincolnshire has green and open spaces of a high quality for all current and future generations to use and enjoy'.

CONTEXT

A range of policies and recommendations underpin this strategy, and includes:

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and replaces the previous national planning guidance - PPG17 'Planning for Open Space, Sport and recreation'. However, the associated companion guide, 'Addressing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17' is still valid and provides additional guidance to that provided in the NPPF.

Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to health and wellbeing of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required.

Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

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

The NPPF also introduces the concept of 'Local Green Space', whereby local communities, through local and neighbourhood plans, can identify green areas of particular importance to them for special protection (equivalent to Green Belt status). Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed and where it can be demonstrated that the space is related and of particular local significance to the community.

The NPPF stresses the importance of open spaces in terms of providing for biodiversity, promoting healthy lifestyles and in mitigating flood risk and future vulnerability to climate change.

Localism Act 2011

The government expects local authorities to empower their communities and maintain strong links with the voluntary and community groups. The current Localism Act 2011 includes new community Rights designed to enable local people to play a major part in shaping and helping to manage green spaces where they live.

This empowerment of local communities through schemes such as the creation of Neighbourhood Plan documents could be used as mechanism to deliver the actions set out within this plan. Opportunities such as these should be explored through working closely with community groups, where possible. If for example a specific area is deficient in a typology than a document such as the neighbourhood plan could look at ways of addressing this deficiency locally.

Local Plan

The Regional Spatial Strategy was revoked in February 2013 which has meant that the North East Lincolnshire Local Plan (Draft Strategy Document.) provides the overall planning policy framework. The Strategy Document is the key document within the Local Plan setting out the overall planning framework for development in North East Lincolnshire. It sets out how much development is likely to come forward by 2029 and includes general policies guiding developments of different types including new housing, commercial and retail uses.

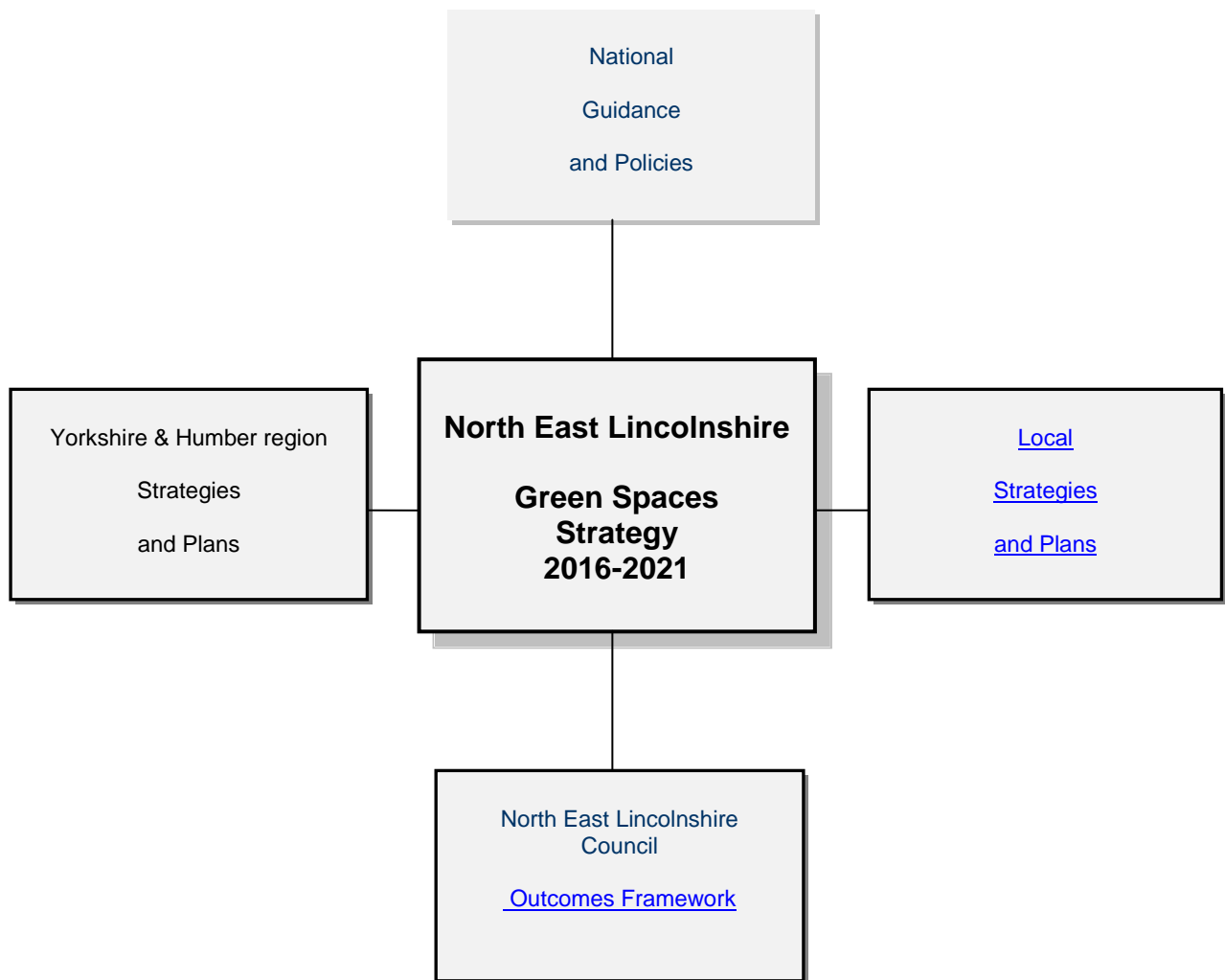
The North East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2015 sets out the long-term spatial vision for how its towns, villages and countryside will develop and change over the Plan period and how this vision will be delivered through a strategy for promoting, distributing and delivering sustainable development and growth. The Green Space Strategy is used to inform the development of the Local Plan with regards to setting out a clear commitment to developing high quality green spaces. The Green Space Strategy identifies the need to work with developers to maximise contributions through Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Level (CIL) funding and to fundamentally commit to the provision of quality green spaces.

Impact of Development Proposals

The scale of allocations proposed in the Local Plan will likely have a significant impact upon green space across the borough. Linked to the scale of allocations, it is anticipated that there will be a corresponding increase in demand for open space, potentially worsening the ratio of open space provision per population. In addition increasing usage may also have a negative impact upon areas of green space noted as having existing quality issues.

The Local Plan contains a set of standards for open space, shown in the table below and it is expected that new development should help contribute towards helping each ward achieve these targets through on site provision.

How the Green Spaces Strategy fits with other strategies and policies:



NELC Current Green Space Standards Table

Open Space Typology	Current Local Provision Standard	Current Local Accessibility Standard
National Green Space	1ha/1,000 population	Informal amenity space within 200 m Local recreational area – within 400 m Borough Park within 1,000 m Major Park – within 3,000m
Children's play	0.8ha/1,000 population of which 0.1 ha should be designated equipped playing space	Within 800 m
Outdoor Sports	1.6ha/1,000 population	Within 1,200m
Allotments	0.2ha/1,000 population	No local standard has been set.
Woodland	No local standard has been set	No local standard has been set

These targets translate into an on-site provision requirement by applying the following formula:

- It is estimated that 1,000 population equates to 455 homes, with an average occupancy rate of 2.2 people per home.
- 455 developed at 30dph equates to 15.2ha.
- A 70% net developable area equates to gross development site area of 22ha.
- The Local Standards per 1,000 population will therefore apply to a gross development site of 22ha.
- Developers would be expected to contribute a proportionate amount of open space based on the above formula.

The Green Spaces Strategy has important links with other strategies, plans and practices within the Council. The quality of green space reflects on the environment, community engagement, activities and participation, and has a strong influence on the economic gains of attracting businesses and new residents and satisfying existing commitments, including those to wildlife and heritage.

Over the last five years there has been significant change in the economic and political climate at a national and local level. Resources for public services are being reduced and this will have an impact across all Council service areas including Green Spaces. This Green Space Strategy has been developed against this backdrop and sets out the contribution that green spaces make to the [Council's Outcome Framework](#)

At a local level the Framework recognises the need to invest in the improvement and maintenance of parks and open spaces, particularly through capital investment under [Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#) (as amended), commonly known as s106 agreements and often known as developer contributions. The Green Spaces strategy will contribute to achieving the Council's commitment to its core ambition of 'Stronger Economy, Stronger Communities.'

The Green Spaces Strategy has also been prepared as an important supporting document to inform the emerging Local Plan framework.

In addition, the North East Lincolnshire Play Strategy was developed during 2007 and published in 2008. It was produced by a steering group which brought together North East Lincolnshire Council, local partners and young people who worked with a local consultancy to identify the needs, wants and issues that the area faced in respect to children's play and play provision. It was also used to secure funding, that was available at that time and enabled a number of play areas within North East Lincolnshire to be updated and re-developed.

In 2016, the same consultancy was approached to undertake a short refresh of the 2008 Play Strategy. The key aims were to bring the information contained within the 2008 Strategy up to date in terms of policy changes, resources available and the changing interests and wishes of the children and young people within the district. It is intended the 2015 refreshed Play Strategy will not replace the 2008 Play Strategy but will update it in terms of current policy, local views, policy links and provide a snap shot of play facilities within the district.

Our Vision

‘To ensure that every area of North East Lincolnshire has green and open spaces of excellent quality for all current and future generations to use and enjoy’.

Aim 1	To promote the central role that green spaces play in contributing to the Borough’s health and well-being.
Aim 2	Provide and maintain quality green spaces in appropriate locations and ensure they are protected for future generations.
Aim 3	Use green spaces as a community resource that encourages active outdoor participation.
Aim 4	Promote the important role that green spaces play in contributing to the biodiversity, climate change, sustainability, culture and heritage within the Borough.
Aim 5	To ensure everyone living, working and visiting North East Lincolnshire has access to green spaces.
Aim 6	Allow local people to understand and influence the way the Green Spaces are developed and managed
Aim 7	Agree objectives for good design, management and maintenance, and provision in new housing sites.

Aim 1

To promote the central role that green spaces play in contributing to the Borough’s health and well-being

People need to feel welcomed into a green space. The overall impression should be positive and inviting. It has been shown that access to attractive green open spaces has a positive impact on health and wellbeing as they provide opportunities for physical exercise as well as mental stimulation and a place to relax. Considering a number of factors such as air quality, stress and accessible areas for informal exercise, recent government research has placed a value of £300 per person per year on living close to a natural green space in terms of savings to the NHS. The use of ANGSt (Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard) to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of local accessible green spaces can help ensure that such opportunities are available to all communities.

Objective 1: Promote our green spaces and encourage local people to use them to benefit their health and wellbeing.

Objective 2: Promote the health benefits of parks and open spaces, encourage active and healthy life-styles and promote social inclusion.

Objective 3: Raise people awareness of Green Spaces, and make sites and activities within them safe, accessible and attractive to all groups and individuals, increasing use and satisfaction and contribute to health, learning, wildlife and community cohesion.

Aim 2**Provide and maintain quality green spaces in appropriate locations and ensure they are protected for future generations.**

The provision of land for public access and enjoyment requires continuing effort to ensure that such sites are safe, clean and fit for purpose. This involves a wide range of management and maintenance functions; the extent and nature of these functions varies depending on the type of site, with designated parks generally requiring the greatest input and natural sites the least.

The management of green spaces is not only grounds maintenance. It may also include delivery of services and events for visitors, monitoring usage, dealing with reports of vandalism and nuisance behaviour, and ensuring site security. The need to protect green spaces and the facilities within them is important; investment in improvements can be wasted if these issues are not addressed. Land owners are often unable to adequately deal with such issues; consequently they are increasingly being dealt with through multi-agency approaches involving the Police, the Council, other members of Safer Communities Team and the community. Successful methods, where resources allow, include using CCTV both as a deterrent and to provide evidence for prosecutions. The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 gives Councils new powers to make control orders covering dogs and litter. They can be more effective than by-laws because they allow Council officers to issue on-the-spot fixed penalties, rather than having to follow legal processes.

The Council will seek to ensure that all open spaces are of good quality and provide a range of facilities associated with the size and type of each space.

Objective 4: Ensure parks and open spaces are managed to an appropriate level within the allocated budget and ensure they meet the grounds maintenance outcome specification standards.

Objective 5: Continue to work in partnership with Planning to ensure we continue to meet the planning and policy regulations in respect of open spaces.

Objective 6: Encourage responsible use of sites and take effective action with partners to combat anti-social behaviour.

Aim 3**Use green spaces as a community resource that encourages active outdoor participation.**

Objective 7: Explore and expand on the opportunities for and from the education sectors

Aim 4**Promote the important role that green spaces play in contributing to the biodiversity, climate change, sustainability, culture and heritage within the Borough.**

We will:

- Improve open space and protect against the fragmentation of open space to maximise biodiversity. Adopt planning policies that facilitate the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and open spaces, as well as the creation of new open areas in new development schemes. Adopt planning policies that seek to reduce levels of water consumption in new developments.
- Encourage the provision of Sustainable Urban Drainage systems.

- North East Lincolnshire parks will aim to address its own management practices to make them more sustainable. From recycling materials, to ensuring that grounds maintenance services and those with long term leases, such as cafes, follow best practice.

Objective 8: Manage all public spaces, where appropriate, to protect and enhance their potential value for wildlife, habitats and biodiversity

Aim 5

To ensure everyone living and working and visiting North East Lincolnshire has access to green spaces. We aspire to ensure that people have excess to an informal amenity space with 200m, local recreational areas with 400m, Borough park with 1000m and major park within 3000m of their home. The standard will be applied to all new developments as well as existing residential areas.

The methodology used to identify catchment areas takes data from user surveys and takes the distance from which the majority of users have travelled to reach sites. The results are rationalised into walking, cycling and for larger sites, public transport and/or driving distances. The approach used adopts 5, 10, 15 or 20 minute travel times and converts them into distances using typical walking, cycling, and public transport or driving times. Taking both into account, we have then recommended a 15 minute walk time distance threshold is applied to outdoor sports in North East Lincolnshire. This standard has then been used to map pitch and non-pitch facilities to identify deficiencies.

Objective 9: Ensure all resident can access a range of green spaces within a reasonable distance.

Objective 10: Ensure that the Green Spaces Strategy issues are feed into the Local Plan.

Objective 11: Ensure provision for children and young people

Aim 6

Allow local people to understand and influence the way the Green Spaces are developed and managed.

The Council will continue to encourage community involvement in the design of green spaces, when new spaces are developed or existing spaces improved. The Council will also continue to encourage involvement in the management of green space, mainly through support of the Neighbourhood forums and Elected Members in their role as community champions.

Objective 12: Actively involve communities in decision making, development and managing open spaces locally.

Aim 7

Set objectives for good design, management and maintenance, and provision in new housing sites.

Objective 13: Ensure new facilities adopt Council set standards and criteria and encourage and recognise the wide habitat value of the site.

Funding

The Council does not have unlimited budgets for open and green space management and improvement. However it is anticipated that the action plan will be delivered through the existing revenue budget. Careful consideration must be given to ensure that any works carried out to green spaces are affordable and sustainable in the long term.

The strategy acknowledges that even though fund is limited there are still opportunities for the council to work with partners and volunteers to deliver safe, active and well managed spaces. Where possible, sources of additional external funding will also be secured.

Grounds Management and Maintenance

The provision of land for public access and enjoyment requires continuing effort to ensure that such sites are safe, clean and fit for purpose. This involves a wide range of management and maintenance functions; the extent and nature of these functions varies depending on the type of site, with designated parks generally requiring the greatest input and natural sites the least.

The management of green spaces is not only grounds maintenance. It may also include delivery of services and events for visitors, monitoring usage, dealing with reports of vandalism and nuisance behaviour, and ensuring site security. The Council will seek to ensure that all open spaces are of good quality and provide a range of facilities associated with the size and type of each space.

North East Lincolnshire's green and open spaces are managed and maintained by Neighbourhood Services. Maintenance operations are based on the grounds maintenance outcome specification, which is regularly monitored against.

Some operations are constant throughout the year and other performed on seasonal or annual basis. Examples of some of the main green and open space operations include;

- Grass cutting and shrub bed maintenance
- Litter picking, emptying litter bins and dog waste bins
- Play area safety inspections and maintenance
- Tree work, including safety inspections
- Sports field preparation and maintenance

Monitoring, Implementation and Evaluation

The strategy has a lifespan of 5 years. The monitoring and review process for the Green Spaces Strategy is expected to take place annually for certain considerations, especially short term objectives and actions taking place in 2016 and 2017. For medium or long term considerations, including strategic projects, the monitoring and review process will take place mid-term of the plan. It will be reviewed by Regeneration Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel and regularly and timely reports will be provided to the Leadership Team.

The actions identified will be incorporated into annual work programmes as appropriate and subject to available finance, with progress against the targets reviewed annually.

Overall the responsibility for the strategic and operation delivery of the green spaces will be government by the Portfolio Holder for the Environment, who will report directly to cabinet Scrutiny Panel for Environment who will continually challenge and monitor progress

As Community Champions the Elected members role will be to provide direct support to community groups and residents on the current and future management of parks and open

spaces to ensure they are appropriate and meet the current and future needs and aspiration of the local residents.

Defining green space

Green space can mean something different to everyone and there is no set definition. Green space has, over the last ten years, come to represent a generic term for open spaces, parks, gardens, wildlife areas, allotments and churchyards that are usually managed by local authorities. In planning policy terms the Nationally Planning Policy Framework (2012) does not provide a definition of green space. However for the purposes of this review, the term green space will refer to sites or areas within the typologies provided in the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG 17). These are summarised below:

Category	To feature within this category, green and open spaces must be one of the following:
Green Space for the Built And Natural Environments	<i>Registered and unregistered parks and gardens, urban and rural woodlands, nature reserves, green corridors, allotment sites, country parks, village greens, amenity green space as part of settlement streetscape and spaces as part of planning obligations.</i>
Green Space for Play and Recreation	<i>Play areas, sports pitches, multi-use games areas (MUGAs), tennis courts, bowling greens, skate parks, athletics tracks, cycle tracks and croquet lawns.</i>
Green Space with Additional character	<i>Cemeteries and churchyards and open spaces within the built boundary of an urban boundary or village envelope that form a break in the pattern of development, pictorial and wildflower meadows, open space that specifies a marked landscape character.</i>
Green Space to Support and Protect Coastal Settlements	<i>Green attractions that form part of the promenade and seafront.</i>
Focal Open Space	<i>Market places and civic squares.</i>
Green Space in the Countryside	<i>Green space that is outside the built periphery and within the countryside.</i>
Green Space Cross Boundary Sites	<i>Green space that continues beyond the boundary of North East Lincolnshire into other Local Authority Districts</i>

Current Green Space Provision

This sections sets out the current supply of green space across the borough.

North East Lincolnshire has a wide collection of parks, woodlands, biodiversity sites and play areas in local neighbourhoods. The borough includes over 40km² of land in the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). A population of 157,300 people (2001-2010 ONS population estimates) are in a position to access over 60 parks and open spaces situated in residential sites.

We need an understanding of what we have, where it is and its quality and accessibility, as it would be difficult to plan how to provide maintain and develop Green Spaces in North East Lincolnshire. We have therefore mapped all parks and green spaces for the Borough.

North East Lincolnshire has over 60 Parks and Open Spaces ranging from small grass play areas to a Country Park covering over 150 acres.

We offer a wide range of activities in our parks, including 46 equipped play areas. You can view information on our parks and green spaces by clicking [here](#)

The current provision within North East Lincolnshire includes:

Category	Quantity
Equipped play areas	45
Multi-use games areas	7
Skate parks	3
BMX tracks	3
Youth shelters	8
Bowling Greens	8
Tennis Courts	7

A comprehensive list of parks and open spaces is provided in on [NELC web site](#)

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDANCE

Current council Local Plan Open Space Policy Considerations

Policy LTC1: Amenity Open Space

“Within amenity open space areas, including proposed open amenity space areas as shown on the proposals map, a development proposal will only be permitted if:

(i) it is compatible with any existing or potential recreational and leisure facilities or other existing authorised uses within the amenity open space;

(ii) it will not have an unduly adverse effect on the nature, character, visual appearance, amenity value, agricultural potential and nature conservation value of the Amenity Open Space

Policy LTC2: Loss of Amenity Open Space

“A development proposal involving the loss or partial loss of recreational and leisure facilities will only be permitted if the proposal is of proven public interest that outweighs the recreation, leisure, nature conservation and amenity interest of the amenity open space, or if the sport and recreational facilities can best be retained and enhanced through redevelopment of part of the site. Where such a proposal is considered acceptable, the council will seek to secure, by negotiation, suitable replacement of lost recreational and leisure related uses elsewhere within the plan area where the need is greatest.”

National and Local Planning Policy

Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up to date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required.

Nationally, there is an expectation that councils will take stock of the need for Green Spaces locally, and how well current Green Spaces meet this need. Whilst the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG's) have been replaced by the NPPF, the later does not contain the level of detail required to provide technical guidance of the type that the PPGs did. Therefore, the PPGs and PPG17, in particular are used in this document as reference points, in the absence of detailed up to date guidance. The aim should be to produce Green Spaces Strategies that will provide Green Spaces fit for the modern era. PPG 17 also states how open space and recreation should be considered with the new Local Development framework.

Provision of New Green Space - Where new homes are developed outside the catchments of existing green spaces then in all but the smallest developments new green space would need to be provided to ensure the proposed accessibility standards are met. This would be in line with in PPG 17 standards and as per existing Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Nature Nearby – Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard’s (ANGSt) - Natural England, March 2010

These standards, known as the ANGSt standards, formulated by Natural England, set out what are considered to be the amounts of natural greenspace that should be accessible to everyone based on certain distance thresholds. In the standards, natural greenspace is defined as “places where human control and activities are not intensive so that a feeling of naturalness is allowed to predominate”. Natural and semi-natural greenspace exists as distinct open space types but also as discrete areas within the majority of other types of greenspaces.

[Blue Sky, Green Space: Understanding the Contribution Parks and Green Spaces can make to Improving People’s Lives \(2011\)](#)

This report outlines the benefits of open space, in all its forms, regardless of whether sites are provided by statutory agencies, local authorities (including parish councils), or by community groups. It is suggested within the documents that these benefits can cost-effectively promote health and wellbeing as well as increasing opportunities volunteering, actions and engagement.

[The Greater Lincolnshire Local Nature Partnership](#)

With Government accreditation in 2012 Lincolnshire Biodiversity Partnership became the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership.

The work of the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership focuses on key areas. The delivery work streams include the Geodiversity Strategy, the Lincolnshire Environmental Records Centre, Local Sites and the Nature Strategy. The strategic work streams involve working with people and organisations across four thematic areas:

- Farming with nature
- Planning with nature
- Enjoying nature
- Being well with nature

Climate Change and Sustainability

Open spaces can help to mitigate climate change and also have a role in adapting to future more extreme weather conditions. Landscaped open space helps to reduce the effects of urban heat islands by helping clean and cool the air, and providing more effective storm water management.

Flood and Water Management

The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 has been introduced in response to recent flooding. It includes measures to encourage the greater use of sustainable drainage systems by removing the automatic right to connect to sewers. This is likely to increase the importance of green spaces as assets that help us to manage surface drainage.

Health and wellbeing

Good quality open spaces can make a significant contribution towards healthy living. Green spaces have a positive effect on the health of the population helping to reduce stress, provide formal and informal opportunities for physical activity, sport and play and provide environments for relaxation. Regular physical activity contributes to the prevention and management of over 20 conditions including coronary heart disease, diabetes, stress and depression and certain types of cancer and obesity. Although some parts of North East Lincolnshire perform well against national figures in terms of general health, there are

pockets of the borough with a significant proportion of residents suffering from poor health. To help tackle these issues and achieve better health and wellbeing for North East Lincolnshire it will be important to develop ways of making access to open spaces easier in these areas, and for those groups that find it difficult to access or use open space.

Who will be the main beneficiaries of the Green Space Strategy?

All stakeholders with an interest in green and open spaces will be beneficiaries of the GSS. They will have the ability to share resources and co-operate together in developing sites for the future.

Local Residents

This strategy will make changes to the way green space is provided. Residents of North East Lincolnshire will have improved methods of engaging with the council on the strategy and action plan, regardless of age, gender, sexuality, disability or ethnicity.

Elected Members

Members of North East Lincolnshire Council seek to advertise, endorse and support the green spaces of their constituencies.

- They have a vital role of raising community awareness.
- They will be Community Champions and ensure parks and open spaces meet the needs and aspirations of the residents.
- They represent local interests when the strategy is at the consultation and implementation stages.

Partner organisations

This strategy will allow partners to expand their involvement in site responsibility and ownership. They need to have an appropriate plan in place to effectively operate a green space, either to maintain the environment, or to improve it from the conditions at the time of transfer to their control.

- Partners will be in close contact with North East Lincolnshire Council to co-operate. They will also have access to the council's knowledge and advice for green space operations and legislation.
- It will be the responsibility of the Council to inform partners of correct ways to ensure that open spaces are well run and carefully updated in the future.

Leadership Team

The Leadership Team comprises of

- It will make strategic decisions about the future direction of green and open spaces in the borough.
- It will help shape the distribution of authority green and open space.
- To strengthen partnerships between North East Lincolnshire Council and other organisations, groups and individuals that either directly play a role, or that benefit from this strategy.

Local Community Groups/Community Forums

Community groups are here for local voice representation in North East Lincolnshire. They are a consultee for communities to protect and enhance the open areas they use.

Green Spaces Audit

A comprehensive audit of 64 parks and open spaces was carried out in 2011 using the Green Flag Award criteria.

The Green Flag Awards scheme was selected because it is increasingly recognised as an indicator for successful green spaces, for example through the Cleaner, Safer, Greener initiative and reporting requirements of the Local Development framework.

The methodology used was based on the key criteria for the Green Flag Award assessment themes which are summarised below:

Green Flag Award Themes	Principles
A welcome place	All green spaces should be of a high quality and accessible to a wider range of people as possible within the context of each site.
Healthy, safe and secure	All users should have the opportunity to enjoy green spaces that are safe and secure. Green spaces should also contribute to health and well-being.
Cleanliness and maintenance	All green space should have a defined standard for maintenance and cleanliness appropriate to the context of the site.
Sustainability	Green spaces have an inherent role in environmental, social and economic sustainability. Planning and delivery should consider environmental enhancements and potential impacts.
Conservation	Green spaces have a primary role in the protection and conservation of heritage, culture and biodiversity.
Marketing	Strategic planning and operation delivery should understand the needs of all customers and adapt provision and management of green spaces accordingly.
Community involvement	Green spaces are community assets. The planning and delivery of green spaces should seek to involve and engage with people at a number of levels. Facilities should respond to community needs.
Overall management	Long term strategic planning of green spaces should ensure quantitative and qualitative provision to meet the required standards for North East Lincolnshire. Relevant spatial plans, management plans, financial planning and performance monitoring should all come together to help achieve the long term vision.

Green Space Audit Assessment Method 2011

Details of how the assessment and scoring method was completed is provided in [Appendix 1](#)

Assessment Analysis

In 2015 a desk based assessment was carried out of the 2011 parks audit. In conclusion of the desk assessment, it has been agreed at management level that the audit is approximately 90% accurate, it is therefore used to inform this strategy.

The Green Flag Award criteria will be the bench mark standard for the management of current and future parks and opens spaces. We will endeavour to manage all parks to a minimum of standard of 'fair' and those parks and open spaces scoring 'good' or 'excellent' will continue to be maintained to this standard. All new sites will need to meet and maintain a minimum of 'good' criteria.

It is proposed to review the audit in 2017/18.

Equality Statement

The Smarter Neighbourhoods Operations Project has been impact assessed in June 2016. This strategy is part of that over-arching project and thus was considered as part of that assessment which will be re-considered during the life of this strategy and that over-arching project. The Council's Equality Framework states that *'genuine equality of opportunity requires a society in which people are not excluded from the activities of that society on the basis of race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion/belief, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity or age'*.

Conclusion

North East Lincolnshire Council is committed to providing an integrated network of good quality, safe and accessible green spaces with modern and appropriate facilities.

The Green Space Strategy sets out a framework for protecting and enhancing the borough's green spaces, planning for future sustainable development and involving the community in managing and shaping our green environment.

Green Space Audit Assessment Method 2011

Appendix 1

Methods of identifying sites in the audit

- An audit form was created to Design Council (CABE) guidance that includes a score-based grading style. The score based grading style assessed specifies that sites must be listed as on a scale from 1-5, five being excellent.
- The audit used the Green Flag Award standards and the council's own considerations in the strategy.
- It includes 9 sections from A-H which are the same as the Green Flag assessment and accord to features that green and open spaces are most likely to have.
- A total of 73 questions allow the council to match strategy objectives and fully judge our green and open spaces.

It was important to be flexible as some questions were not applicable and do not count towards the overall average. For example, one of the questions refers to the presence of staff which would not be applicable for a small green space. Graded questions do count towards the mark and inform the weighting process described below.

Audit answers (1-5)

Numbers have been given instead of a written score. The latter can be less accurate and does not allow for an average mark to be achieved. Overall, the description of each rating in the audit process is as follows:

Audit question response ratings

5: Represents a very high quality response to the assessment question. There is little improvement needed to this site.

4: The site is of a good quality, having met most terms of the assessment question, although there is always room for improvement.

3: The site is satisfactory in meeting certain terms of the assessment question, but falls down on others. There is scope to make this site better.

2: The site is poor in meeting the terms of the assessment question and requires focus on resolutions that raise the score in this area.

1: The site is very poor in meeting the terms of the assessment question and may be detrimentally affected.

The audit questions give us a method to identify where further research should be commissioned on the green space. Items of further research could concern site ownership and maintenance and local organisations that have an involvement in green and open spaces.

The weighting process

For the strategy audit assessment we have developed a weighted average to score each open space and a total overall score has also been recorded.

Section	Weighting	Average (A)	Maximum Score	Index (B)
A	10	3.33	50	33.3
B	20	4.10	100	82
C	20	2.75	100	55
D	10	2.98	50	29.8
E	10	4.31	50	43.1
F	10	2.85	50	28.5
G	10	2.63	50	26.3
H	10	3.14	50	31.4
Total	10	3.26	500	329.4

How were the scores and averages calculated?

- There is an average of all numbers received for the open space in each section (A). Additionally, sections have an index (B) which is a calculation of the average multiplied by the weighting.
- The strategy states that certain sections of the audit assessment will be given greater weight to meet the current strategic aims of the council.
- In this regard, sections B (healthy, safe and secure) and C (Clean and well maintained) attract a weighting of 20 as shown in figure 1 above.
- Once the above stages were completed, the final audit procedure was to calculate a total weighted average and a grade. The weighted average was calculated by dividing the overall index number by 500 (the maximum permissible score in the audit) and multiplying by 100. In the above example from figure 1 the weighted average would be the following:

Weighted average = $329.4/500 \times 100 = 65.88$. This attracts a 'good' rating.

Park and open space scoring process

Grading

Weighted average for a park (%)	Grade
75.00% & above	EX (Excellent)
60.01% & above (or 60.01-74.99%)	GD (Good)
50.01-59.99%	S2 (Satisfactory, but little or no improvements are needed)
40.01-49.99%	S1 (Satisfactory; requires course(s) of action before the strategy review in 2016)
40.00% & under	P (Poor – Some immediate course(s) of action 2011-12 and further action required before strategy review in 2016.

Our audit criteria

The council will commit to the following process when using audit results:

1. Green Flag Award standards require 75% of the criteria to continually be met for awarded parks to continue receiving the designation.
2. The council expects all Good and S2 rated parks to require no further investment until the Green Space Strategy review in 2017, when the sites will be re-audited.
3. Investments at S1 sites in 2011-16 must be judged on the level of need for investment, considering factors such as proximity to recently invested open space, planning applications of over 10 dwellings and the number of people who would benefit from the S1 site. In these spaces, there is no guarantee of change within the next 5 years.

Green Space Strategy Audit Assessment 2011 - Results

Appendix 1 cont.

Quality Site Assessment Table	Ainslie Street	Albion Street	Alden Close	Archer Road	Auditorium Open Space	Barretts Recreation Ground	Bradley/ Dixon Woods	Bradley Hollow	Bradley Recreation Ground	Brigsley Play Area	Butt Lane
Total numbered score	137	94	79	70	95	164	131	89	206	88	162
No of N/As at open space	22	33	32	37	29	23	27	33	19	35	21
Non weighted grade average	2.69	2.23	1.93	1.94	2.16	3.28	2.85	2.28	3.81	2.32	3.08
Overall index	277.12	207.00	166.67	173.33	218.14	281.91	289.97	217.74	406.92	203.72	286.96
Weighted grade average	55.42	41.40	33.33	34.67	43.63	56.38	57.99	43.55	81.38	40.74	57.39
Grade rating (provisional)	S2	S1	P	P	S1	S2	S2	S1	EX	S1	S1

Quality Site Assessment Table	Clee Fields	Cleethorpes Boating Lake	Cleethorpes Country Park	Chapel Lane Habrough	Cooper Road	Cranwell Drive	Cravens Lane	Duke of York Gardens	Fords Avenue	Freeman Street Skate Park	Freshney Park
Total numbered score	142	271	205	70	112	81	69	205	108	150	158
No of N/As at open space	20	5	17	34	28	43	40	16	28	28	25
Non weighted grade average	2.68	3.99	3.66	1.79	2.49	2.70	2.09	3.60	2.40	3.33	3.29
Overall index	227.37	426.58	400.86	167.63	231.36	205.00	172.84	354.00	259.95	293.70	307.81
Weighted grade average	45.47	85.32	80.17	33.53	46.27	41.00	34.57	70.80	51.85	58.74	61.56
Grade rating (provisional)	S1	EX	EX	P	S1	S1	P	GD	S1	S1	GD

Quality Site Assessment Table	Hardys Recreation Ground	Haverstoe Park	Homestead Park	King George V Fields Clee	King George V Fields GY	Kingston Gardens	Love Lane	Mount Pleasant	Nelson Way	Neville Turner Way	New Waltham Hall
Total numbered score	116	208	164	159	128	150	96	160	121	187	145
No of N/As at open space	35	7	21	20	23	26	38	21	30	21	26
Non weighted grade average	3.05	3.15	3.15	3.00	2.56	3.19	2.74	3.08	2.81	3.60	3.09
Overall index	246.83	351.29	325.16	289.56	230.08	318.92	217.95	270.12	263.56	351.60	304.67
Weighted grade average	49.37	70.26	65.03	57.91	46.02	63.78	43.59	54.02	52.71	70.32	60.93
Grade rating (provisional)	S1	GD	GD	S2	S1	GD	S1	S2	S2	GD	GD

Quality Site Assessment Table	Poplar Road	Quantock Park	Royal Drive	Seafront Gardens	Scartho Top	Scartho Park	Sidney Park	Sixhills	Spring Street	Scrivelsby Court	St. Christophers
Total numbered score	150	150	128	282	126	147	202	103	93	110	154
No of N/As at open space	20	27	21	10	34	29	7	39	25	23	16
Non weighted grade average	2.83	3.26	2.46	4.48	3.23	3.34	3.06	3.03	1.94	2.20	2.70
Overall index	274.27	293.94	240.32	498.53	260.45	280.48	326.85	239.29	184.17	196.00	251.25
Weighted grade average	54.85	58.79	48.06	99.71	52.09	56.10	65.37	47.86	36.83	39.20	50.25
Grade rating (provisional)	S2	S2	S1	EX	S2	S2	GD	S1	P	P	S2

Quality Site Assessment Table	Sussex Recreation Ground	Sutherland Park	Trinity Skate Park	Trinity Play Field	Weelsby Woods	Wendover Paddock	Westward Ho	Wingate Parade	Winslow Drive
Total numbered score	157	120	122	134	237	130	103	114	68
No of N/As at open space	26	24	36	30	6	25	30	27	41
Non weighted grade average	3.34	2.45	3.3	3.12	3.54	2.71	2.40	2.48	2.13
Overall index	307.29	266.10	291.07	279.78	386.46	272.77	220.69	230.01	185.10
Weighted grade average	61.46	53.22	58.21	55.96	77.29	54.55	44.14	46.00	37.02
Grade rating (provisional)	GD	S2	S2	S2	EX	S2	S1	S1	P