

Supporting Good Decisions

**Promoting Equality and Human Rights;
Reducing Poverty; and
Protecting the Environment**

Integrated Impact Assessment Form

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Promoting Equality and Human Rights; Reducing Poverty; and Protecting the Environment

Title of Policy/ Proposal	East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2025
Timescale for Implementation	November 2025 – 2035 (i.e. 10-year strategy)
IIA Completion Date	19/09/2025
Completed by	Jennifer Lothian, Strategy, Policy & Development Manager, Amenity Services
Lead officer	Jennifer Lothian, Strategy, Policy & Development Manager, Amenity Services

Section 1: Screening

1.1 Briefly describe the policy/proposal/activity you are assessing.

An Open Space Strategy sets out proposals for the development, maintenance and use of open spaces in a local authority's area, and proposals to meet future need and demand. Preparing an Open Space Strategy is a statutory duty for local authorities under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, and it must be taken into consideration in the Local Development Planning process.

East Lothian Council has a previous East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2018 in place. This requires to be renewed and updated to reflect the current policy context, which includes the Council's declaration of Climate Emergency (in 2019) and Nature Emergency (in 2023), as well as the new national planning context set out in National Planning Framework 4.

The East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2025 will be a 10-year strategy which sets out the strategic context and importance of East Lothian's publicly accessible 'green', 'blue' and 'grey' spaces, including urban parks, greenspaces, open spaces and civic spaces.

The East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2025 will ensure that East Lothian Council, as Planning Authority, meets the statutory requirement set out in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019:

"3G Open space strategy

- (1) A planning authority is to prepare and publish an open space strategy.
- (2) An open space strategy is to set out a strategic framework of the planning authority's policies and proposals as to the development, maintenance and use of green infrastructure in their district, including open spaces and green networks.
- (3) An open space strategy must contain—
 - (a) an audit of existing open space provision,

- (b) an assessment of current and future requirements,
- (c) any other matter which the planning authority consider appropriate.”

The East Lothian Open Space Strategy (OSS) 2025 will meet the requirements set out in the Scottish Government’s Draft Open Space Strategies Regulations as follows:

- The OSS will contain an audit of existing open space provision.
- The OSS audit will include all open spaces in East Lothian that are 0.2 hectares or greater, and other smaller spaces that the planning authority considers appropriate to include.
- The 0.2 ha threshold relates to ‘open space’, which is defined as being spaces ‘within and on the edge of settlements’.
- For each open space included in the audit, information will be provided on its location, size (in hectares), and type.
- This will be presented using GIS based digital mapping.
- The audit will include statements covering the quantity, quality and accessibility for the totality of open spaces and green networks in East Lothian, and for each ‘locality’ (i.e. each Cluster Area) within East Lothian. This is intended to provide a high-level picture as to the state of open space in the local authority area.

The policies, proposals and actions which will be set out in the East Lothian Open Space Strategy will contribute to the following **Outcomes**:

- Improving health, wellbeing and physical activity
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity
- Improving access for all to green spaces, open spaces and green networks
- Ensuring equality by meeting the needs of specific groups so everyone in society benefits
- Creating successful, vibrant, liveable and sustainable places

The East Lothian OSS will include an Action Plan, following on from and updating the existing OSS Action Plan, to deliver the above Outcomes. It will also set out a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

1.2 What will change as a result of this policy?

The aims of the East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2025 are:

- 1. To protect and enhance our existing parks and open spaces**, and provide a strategic framework for the management of open spaces to benefit our communities, for the following reasons in particular:
 - To tackle climate change,
 - To benefit and enhance nature,
 - To help improve people’s health, wellbeing and physical activity,
 - To create vibrant, liveable places where everyone benefits equally from accessible open spaces and greenspaces.

This will provide a framework for the preparation of shovel-ready projects that will enable the Council to seek future funding opportunities to ensure delivery on the ground, working with community groups and other partners.

- 2. To provide high quality new open spaces for the future** and set out the expectations for future development sites in East Lothian, by setting out updated standards that must be met

to ensure sufficient quantity of usable, quality, accessible open spaces that will meet the needs of the community.

These standards are set out in policies and proposals in the East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2025 that will inform the next Local Development Plan (currently in development), and will help ensure the requirements of National Planning Framework 4 are met.

The Council's ambition is that everyone living in East Lothian should have:

- Good quality Amenity Greenspaces on their doorsteps that benefit their health and wellbeing
- Local access to attractive, good quality parks in their town and neighbourhood (Town and Local Parks)
- Local access to good quality Sports Pitches
- Local access to good quality Play Areas
- Local connections to the Green Network, providing access to the countryside along a well designed network of accessible path routes
- Access on a regional basis to country parks, regional sports facilities (Centre for Sporting Excellence) and high quality beaches

1.3 Deciding if a full Impact Assessment is needed.

Please answer the following questions:

	Yes	No
1. The policy/ proposal has consequences for or affects people e.g. how they can access a service?	X	
2. The policy/proposal has potential to make a significant impact on equality and human rights, socio-economic disadvantage, the council's role as a corporate parent, children's rights, or the council's commitment to tackling climate change?	X	
3. The policy/proposal is likely to have a significant environmental impact as defined by the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005?	X	
4. The policy/ proposal involves a data processing activity (storage / collection of personal data) that is likely to result in a high risk to individuals as determined by Article 35 of the General Data Protection Regulation?		X

- If you have answered yes to questions 1 and 2 above, please proceed to complete the Integrated Impact Assessment. If you have answered No then an IIA does not need to be completed. Please keep a copy of the screening paperwork.

- If you have answered yes to question 3, you will need to consider whether you need to complete a Strategic Environmental Assessment.
 - If you have answered yes to question 4, you will need to consider whether you need to complete a Data Protection Impact Assessment. Please seek further advice from the Team Manager Information Governance.
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Section 2: Integrated Impact Assessment

2.1 Have those who are directly affected by the policy had the opportunity to comment on new proposals?

Yes. A public consultation on the Draft East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2025 took place for 6 weeks from 4 June to 16 July 2025, via the online Consultation Hub <https://eastlothianconsultations.co.uk/policy-partnerships/consultation-on-east-lothian-open-space-strategy-r/>. Respondents were able to provide comments on the draft proposals and provide details of what they think of our parks and greenspaces and what would make them better, to help formulate the policies and proposals for the final Open Space Strategy 2025. In addition, we sought the views of representative organisations, representing the views of specific groups including people from ethnic minorities and women & girls. The consultation information was also sent to all East Lothian Community Councils, to East Lothian Local Access Forum, and to other relevant groups and organisations including 'In Bloom' groups, 'Friends Of' parks groups, and the ELC Countryside Rangers' volunteer networks, 'Friends' groups and conservation volunteers. The consultation was publicised extensively via the Council's communication channels.

2.2 What information/data have you used to inform the development of the policy to date?

Public consultation and engagement, including six facilitated workshops across the county, informed the development of the Open Space Audit and previous Open Space Strategy 2018 and laid the foundations for the Open Space Strategy 2025.

The East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2025 was informed by public consultation and engagement. This included views and feedback on parks, greenspaces and open spaces gathered through recent consultations on the East Lothian Play Sufficiency Assessment, draft Tree and Woodland Strategy for East Lothian, consultations to inform the Evidence Report for the next Local Development Plan, and consultations and engagement to inform the next East Lothian Partnership 'Local Outcomes Improvement Plan' (LOIP) for East Lothian. Engagement to inform the new LOIP included the voices of over 9,000 children, young people and families and over 15,000 community voices.

During the development of the East Lothian Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA), East Lothian Council commissioned Play Scotland, the national representative body for play, to undertake extensive consultation and engagement with children and young people, which has informed both the PSA and the Open Space Strategy 2025 through feedback obtained from children and young people. This ensured we met the requirements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024.

The East Lothian PSA by Play Scotland also provided the transparency and shared understanding necessary for meaningful engagement with disabled children and families. East Lothian was the first authority in Scotland to undertake a full and transparent assessment of accessible and inclusive play provision in formal outdoor play spaces. This new form of assessment aims to inform the development

of inclusive formal outdoor play spaces as required by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD) and NPF4. The findings also included views on wider parks and greenspace settings and their accessibility and inclusion, from the perspectives of disabled children and their families. This has also helped inform the Open Space Strategy 2025 and ensure that the views of children and young people are included.

Targeted direct engagement was undertaken with representatives of groups/organisations including 'Thrive East Lothian' CIC and Women's Aid East and Midlothian, to ensure the views of specific groups, including people from ethnic minorities and women and girls could be heard, particularly in relation to issues such as safety in parks.

References included in the strategy included recent research findings on the impacts of access to green space on health and reducing inequalities. Greenspace Scotland's 'Health Impact Assessment of Greenspace' (2008) was also a valuable source of information.

2.3 What does the evidence/ research suggest about the policy's actual or likely impact on equality groups and those vulnerable/ or experiencing socio-economic disadvantage?

Evidence	Comment
Which groups are in particular need of this service?	<p>This proposal is a Strategy, not a service. The overarching benefits will be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reduce health and wellbeing inequities within and across our communities in terms of access to quality greenspace, with particular emphasis on targeting improvements towards poorer quality green spaces and open spaces identified through the Open Space Audit 2024/25; To improve air quality, reduce pollution, reduce the 'urban heat island' effect, provide shade from trees in hotter summers, reduce surface flood-water impacts, through nature-based solutions to improve the climate resilience of our places and reduce climate risks & impacts; Improve accessibility for people with a range of abilities including disabilities, enable everyone to access nature and greenspaces close to where they live, for outdoor play, sport, wellbeing, social gathering, reducing loneliness & social isolation, creating welcoming places for social gathering, civic events and enjoying the outdoors. <p>The public consultation on the Draft Open Space Strategy highlighted the importance of engaging with local people,</p>
What level of service uptake/ access is there from protected and vulnerable groups?	
Can you identify positive outcomes for service users	
What is the service user experience of those from protected or vulnerable groups?	

	<p>wider stakeholders, and particularly specific groups who may be impacted, including those who have protected characteristics. Equality in access to parks was mentioned by several respondents, particularly the need to consider difference in preference, needs and safety between sexes by designing safe spaces for both sexes, noting that large open areas of grass tend to be used more by boys, whereas multiple smaller areas encourage greater use by girls. Safety in parks in the evenings/at night was also highlighted, particularly by women's groups. The recent East Lothian Play Sufficiency Assessment shows that the needs of teenagers, particularly teenage girls, and the needs of families with disabled children are not being fully met and are priorities for improvements. The Open Space Strategy engagement has also identified that the needs of older people and those with mobility issues need to be addressed.</p> <p>The Strategy proposes that detailed Park Management Plans, and proposals for improving specific greenspaces within communities, should be undertaken with community engagement and collaboration, including involvement of groups with special needs and protected characteristics, to ensure individual parks and greenspaces meet local needs and benefit everyone in our communities.</p> <p>'Community Engagement and Involvement', at every stage, is a 'golden thread' running through the Open Space Strategy 2025.</p>
What opportunity have those from protected groups had to co-produce or comment on the service/ plans?	<p>Targeted direct engagement was undertaken with representatives of groups/organisations including 'Thrive East Lothian' CIC and Women's Aid East and Midlothian, to ensure the views of specific groups, including people from ethnic minorities and women & girls could be heard, particularly in relation to issues such as safety in parks. Engagement with children and young people for the PSA included targeted consultation & engagement, led by Play Scotland, with the following priority groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled and Additional Support Needs (ASN) children and families; • Young women and girls; • Early years (0-4 year olds) families. <p>Five play spaces were also assessed by disabled children and their families with the support from specialist</p>

	practitioners from East Lothian Play Association (ELPA) and Can Do special needs play scheme, to ensure the views and needs of these children and young people were included in the recommendations.
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2.4 How does the policy meet the different needs of groups in the community? Please note that where children will be affected by the policy or activity a **Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact assessment must additionally be completed. [Children's Rights and Well-being Impact Assessment - completion guidance and template](#) | [East Lothian Intranet](#)**

Equality Groups	Comments
Older people, people in the middle years	The Open Space Strategy (OSS) consultation & engagement identified that the needs of older people and those with mobility issues need to be addressed, particularly in relation to appropriate seating / benches / resting places in parks & greenspaces, and that paths/access routes need to be improved. Therefore these are proposed as improvements to be implemented where appropriate.
Children and young people	Children and young people will not be adversely affected. The PSA proposed a range of recommendations for improvements to play spaces, which will benefit children and young people of a range of ages and abilities including disabilities, special needs. Any proposed local improvements would involve seeking views from local people including children & young people wherever possible.
Women, men and transgender people (includes issues relating to pregnancy and maternity)	Safety in parks / the perception of lack of safety, particularly at dusk and night, was identified by consultation with women's groups. Suitable benches/seating/resting places / social seating / gathering places and lighting were also identified. Having more public / civic events in parks would encourage more people to use and enjoy parks and greenspaces. These have all been identified through public consultation, which also highlighted the need for detailed Park Management Plans, and proposals for improving specific greenspaces within communities, to be undertaken with community engagement and

	collaboration, including involvement of groups with special needs and protected characteristics, to ensure individual parks and greenspaces meet local needs and benefit everyone in our communities.
Disabled people (includes physical disability, learning disability, sensory impairment, long-term medical conditions, mental health problems)	Feedback from the public consultations on the OSS and PSA identified that accessibility, particularly of paths within parks and access routes to reach parks, currently do not always meet the needs of disabled people. Actions are proposed to improve accessibility for people with a range of abilities and mobility, including disabilities, ensuring that local people from these groups are involved in developing proposed improvements for specific parks and greenspaces. Good quality parks and greenspaces have been shown through numerous scientific research, to benefit health & wellbeing including mental health.
Minority ethnic people (includes Gypsy/Travellers, migrant workers)	Direct engagement during the consultation on the OSS with a representative organisation working with women from ethnic minority backgrounds enabled their views to be heard and, as above, ensure that specific proposals include their views and requirements to help ensure their needs are met. No specific issues identified for Gypsy/Travellers or migrant workers.
Refugees and asylum seekers	No specific issues identified. However the general improvements proposed to parks & greenspaces aim to benefit everyone in society, including those who do not currently use parks & greenspaces.
People with different religions or beliefs (includes people with no religion or belief)	No specific issues identified. However the general improvements proposed to parks & greenspaces aim to benefit everyone in society, including those who do not currently use parks & greenspaces.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual people	No specific issues identified. However the general improvements proposed to parks & greenspaces aim to benefit everyone in society, including those who do not currently use parks & greenspaces.
People who are unmarried, married or in a civil partnership	No specific issues identified. However the general improvements proposed to parks & greenspaces aim to benefit everyone in society, including those who do not currently use parks & greenspaces.
Those vulnerable to falling into poverty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployed • People on benefits • Lone Parents • Care experienced children and young people • Carers (including young carers) • Homeless people • Those involved in the community justice system • People with low literacy/numeracy • Families with 3 or more children • Those with a child/ children under 1 	<p>The consultation & engagement on the OSS & PSA highlighted the need for detailed Park Management Plans, and proposals for improving specific greenspaces within communities, to be undertaken with community engagement and collaboration, including involvement of groups with special needs and protected characteristics, to ensure individual parks and greenspaces meet local needs and benefit everyone in our communities. Parks, greenspaces and playspaces are free to access, and the aim of this strategy is to improve these spaces, close to where people live, so that everyone in society can benefit. Improving urban greenspaces can bring economic benefits and the strategy embeds Community Wealth Building principles, aiming to help bring benefits locally including opportunities for training and green jobs.</p>
Geographical communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural/ semi rural communities • Urban Communities • Coastal communities • Those living in the most deprived communities (bottom 20% SIMD areas) 	<p>This strategy is about open spaces, including parks, greenspaces & playspaces, within and on the edge of settlements, and assessed 462 open spaces across East Lothian's towns and villages. This included all urban areas, including the most deprived communities, and rural communities. The Strategy aims to ensure equitable access to quality open spaces/ greenspaces across all our communities. A lack of suitable public greenspaces in smaller rural villages was identified as an issue through the public consultation. The Strategy sets out proposals for ensuring sufficient quantity and quality of new</p>

	open space in new developments where these are proposed.
People with communication needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaelic Language Speakers {refer if necessary to the Council's Gaelic Language Plan} • British Sign Language (BSL) users {refer if necessary to the Council's BSL Plan} • English as a Second Language • Other e.g. Deafblind, Plain English, Large Print 	No specific issues identified. However the PSA consultation & engagement with disabled and Additional Support Needs (ASN) children and families resulted in recommendations for play areas, currently being implemented wherever possible, for more inclusive play equipment including 'communication panels' in playspaces.

2.5 Are there any other factors which will affect the way this policy impacts on the community or staff groups?

The Strategy proposes developing Park Management Plans and actions to improve parks & greenspaces that will have multiple benefits to communities, particularly around health & wellbeing, but also climate resilience / climate adaptation and nature enhancement – developing nature-based solutions to enhance our communities.

2.6 Is any part of this policy/ service to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors?

If yes, how have you included equality and human rights considerations into the contract?

There may be projects mentioned in the Strategy carried out by contractors if appropriate, and these considerations would be included at the project level and addressed through the Council's procurement process.

2.7 Have you considered how you will communicate information about this policy or policy change to those affected e.g. to those with hearing loss, speech impairment or English as a second language?

Versions of the Strategy can be provided in Braille, large print, audiotape, or other languages including BSL.

2.8 Please consider how your policy will impact on each of the following?

Equality and Human rights

- Promotes / advances equality of opportunity e.g. improves access to and quality of services
- Promotes good relations within and between people with protected characteristics and tackles harassment
- Promotes participation, is inclusive and gives people control over decisions which affect them
- Preserves dignity and self-respect of individuals (does not lead to degrading treatment or stigma)
- Builds support networks, resilience, community capacity

Comments:

Fundamentally this Strategy aims to reduce inequalities in access to parks and greenspaces in our communities by improving the quality of and access to greenspaces so that everyone in society can benefit from the positive impacts that this can bring, in particular the health and wellbeing benefits, improving social cohesion, reducing social isolation, building resilience, bringing people together in gathering spaces / civic spaces including inter-generational benefits e.g. from allotments and community food-growing, healthy living. Greenspaces are places for environmental education, bringing people including children and young people closer to nature. Community participation in parks and greenspaces through volunteering boosts green skills and confidence, supporting lifelong learning and social, health and wellbeing benefits. Green infrastructure and greenspaces have even been shown to reduce crime, with greener neighbourhoods having lower levels of crime.

Socio-Economic Disadvantage / reducing poverty

- Maximises income and/or reduces income inequality
- Helps young people into positive destinations
- Aids those returning to and those progressing within the labour market
- Improves employability skills, including literacy and numeracy
- Reduces the costs of taking part in activities and opportunities
- Reduces the cost of living

Comments :

Well managed green infrastructure and green spaces create economic benefits, attracting inward investment and encouraging businesses and tourism into an area. Healthier workplaces with access to green infrastructure boost productivity and mental wellbeing. Opportunities to embed Community Wealth Building through enhancement projects bring local benefits, including economic benefits, to the communities who need it most. Greenspaces are places for environmental

education, bringing people including children and young people closer to nature. Community participation in parks and greenspaces through volunteering boosts green skills and confidence, supporting lifelong learning.

Tackling Climate Change

- Reduces the need to travel or increases access to sustainable forms of transport
- Minimises waste / encourages resource efficiency / contributes to the circular economy
- Ensures goods / services are from ethical, responsible and sustainable sources
- Improves energy efficiency / uses low carbon energy sources
- Protects and/or enhances natural environments / habitats / biodiversity
- Promotes the transition to a low carbon economy
- Prepares and/or adapts communities for climate change impacts

Comments:

'Climate' is one of the key themes running through this strategy. Tackling climate change, by enhancing greenspaces, tree planting, implementing nature-based solutions, will help mitigate climate change through carbon sequestration, and will fundamentally help communities adapt to climate change and increase resilience to its impacts. The strategy includes actions to create 'Climate Resilient Places – Tackling the Climate Emergency' working with relevant partners including communities to deliver climate change mitigation and adaption outcomes in parks and open spaces as identified through the strategy and other relevant strategies including the Climate Change Strategy and Area Plans. Actions to improve paths and active travel are also proposed, encouraging people to travel actively and reduce their carbon footprint, reducing reliance on the car.

Corporate Parenting and Care Experienced Young People

- Impacts on care experienced young people
- Provides opportunities or reduces opportunities to participate in activities which are designed to promote the wellbeing of young people
- Adversely affects the wellbeing of young people
- Adversely impacts on outcomes for care experienced young people

Comments:

Improving and enhancing parks, greenspaces and play spaces, including improving accessibility for all ages and abilities, enabling access to nature, and spaces for outdoor play, sports and social gathering / events, will benefit all young people, particularly their health, wellbeing and physical activity. Specific enhancements to play areas / playspaces proposed through the Play Sufficiency Assessment and this strategy, developed through consultation & engagement with a range of children and young people, are intended to benefit all children & young people across our communities.

Section 3. Action Plan

What, if any changes will be made to the proposal/ policy as a result of the assessment?

Changes to be made	Expected outcome of the change	Resources Required	Timeline	Responsible person

For consideration of the Head of Service

Can you identify any cumulative impacts on equality groups or vulnerable people arising from this policy, when considered alongside other changes across other services?

Sign off by Head of Service

Name: Thomas Reid

Date: 25/9/25