

COMMITTEE:	Cabinet
MEETING DATE:	20 January 2026
BY:	Depute Chief Executive – Children and Communities
REPORT TITLE:	East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2026
REPORT STATUS:	Public

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2026 for approval.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is requested to:

- 2.1 Approve the East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2026.
- 2.2 Note that preparation of 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.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 East Lothian's parks, greenspaces, civic spaces, sports areas and other open spaces function as fundamental spaces to benefit people's health and wellbeing, to tackle climate change, and to support and enhance nature.
- 3.2 Parks and open spaces form the character and setting of our towns and villages, provide places for outdoor play, sports and physical activity, social gathering, civic events, and local food growing, in the heart of our communities, and bring economic benefits to the area through tourism. In addition, they are green places of nature networks, capturing and storing carbon, with trees and areas of natural habitat that provide shade in our hotter summers, reduce localised flooding, create homes for nature, and provide us with nature-based solutions in our urban areas.

- 3.3 The East Lothian Open Space Strategy (OSS) 2026 sets out a 10-year strategic framework (2026–2036) for the development, enhancement and management of parks, greenspaces, sports pitches and other open spaces across East Lothian. It aims to:
- Protect and enhance existing publicly accessible open spaces.
 - Guide the provision of high-quality new open spaces.
 - Address climate resilience, biodiversity, health and wellbeing, and social equity.
 - Fulfil statutory obligations under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 and inform the next Local Development Plan.
- 3.4 The OSS 2026 was prepared in-house by Amenity Services, working closely with Planning Service, and with input from officers across Service Areas including the Climate and Nature Emergency Group.
- 3.5 This OSS 2026 fulfils requirements in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 to prepare an Open Space Strategy that sets 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”*. The OSS 2026 replaces the existing East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2018 to reflect the updated legislative, national and local policy context.
- 3.6 The OSS 2026 introduces several significant enhancements from the previous version that will shape how parks, greenspaces, and other open spaces are managed and developed over the next decade. By engaging with and listening to communities in informing this strategy we expect to see more people enjoying and benefiting from our open and green spaces. The key changes and outcomes are:
- **Updated, evidence-led standards and requirements** for open space in East Lothian, informed by detailed audits of 462 sites and feedback from public consultation;
 - **Stronger focus on climate, nature and health and wellbeing**, embedding climate resilience, nature enhancement, and health equity into open space management, planning and design;
 - **Improvements and enhancements to open spaces**, informed by community engagement and involvement and embedding equity and inclusion, with a particular focus on open spaces most in need of improvement as identified through this strategy;
 - **Specific commitments to improve greenspace quality and provision in more deprived areas and address barriers for particular groups** including minority ethnic communities, women and girls, older people, and those with disabilities, through community-informed infrastructure, amenity and nature-based enhancements;
 - **Setting guidance to inform the next Local Development Plan**, to ensure provision of high-quality, multi-functional open spaces and

green networks in new developments, guided by updated open space standards;

- **A framework to focus and prioritise the management and maintenance of open space**, ensuring that the Council has a clear strategic direction to its open space investment and asset management, and as a basis to seek and obtain funding for delivery through a range of funding mechanisms.

3.7 Recognising the fundamental benefits that parks and urban greenspaces bring to our communities, the OSS aims to deliver outcomes based around three key interconnected and overarching themes:

- **Climate:** Mitigating climate change and increasing resilience to climate impacts;
- **Nature:** Helping to tackle the Nature Emergency by protecting and enhancing nature networks and providing vital ecosystem services;
- **Health and Wellbeing:** Fundamental spaces for encouraging healthy living, physical activity, social interaction and mental wellbeing.

3.8 A 'golden thread' running through the strategy is 'Community Engagement and Involvement', at every stage, to ensure these benefits are delivered in the best way to address local issues and enhance people's lives locally. The strategy also recognises the important and valued role of volunteers in parks and greenspaces, including 'Friends Of' parks groups and our award-winning 'In Bloom' groups.

3.9 The strategy sets out East Lothian's updated Standards for Open Space, which seek to address:

- **Quantity:** if there is enough open space and if it is equitably distributed.
- **Quality:** if the open space is 'fit for purpose'.
- **Accessibility:** if the open space is accessible to communities.

3.10 The OSS 2026 included an audit of 462 publicly accessible open spaces and greenspaces across East Lothian, including both Council owned/managed and privately owned/managed open spaces, within and on the edge of settlements. The strategy presents the findings of the application of the open space standards for a range of open space types.

3.11 Significant enhancement projects have been undertaken to Council-owned parks and greenspaces since the 2018 OSS, including Nature Network enhancements, tree planting, play area renewals, active travel and other infrastructure improvements, benefitting residents and visitors.

3.12 The audit assessments showed that across East Lothian, there is a good range and overall quantity of open spaces accessible to local residents, with each Cluster Area meeting quantity standards. All communities have access to high quality open space, with all Cluster Areas meeting quality standards on average, although some sites were below the

quality standard and are a priority for future improvement. The majority of settlements met the accessibility standards.

- 3.13 A public consultation on the draft findings of the OSS was undertaken, to obtain feedback from communities and inform the final OSS. Data and findings from other recent relevant consultations undertaken by the Council, as well as direct engagement with organisations representing specific equality groups in East Lothian, were also incorporated into the findings to influence the final OSS.
- 3.14 The audit assessments, combined with feedback from our communities and representative groups and organisations, has enabled the OSS to set out evidence-based, revised and updated proposals on the development, maintenance and use of open spaces and green networks in East Lothian, and an Action Plan with monitoring and evaluation framework.
- 3.15 The Outcomes for the East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2026, which have been determined with community input through the public consultation, are:
 - 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
- 3.16 Key management priorities for the development, maintenance and use of East Lothian's parks, open spaces and other green infrastructure have been identified through the Open Space Audit and public consultation and are set out in the strategy.
- 3.17 The OSS also sets the strategic framework for open space in new developments that will guide and inform the preparation of detailed policies in the next Local Development Plan (LDP2). The detailed policies and priorities for open space in new developments will be developed through the LDP2 iterative process.
- 3.18 The Open Space Strategy is intended to provide a focus and prioritise the management of open space, ensuring that the Council has a clear strategic direction to its open space investment and asset management, working collaboratively with and involving our communities and other key partners and stakeholders to prioritise equitable and inclusive open space improvements, and as a basis to seek and obtain funding for delivery.
- 3.19 Parks, greenspaces, sports pitches and other open spaces not only provide critical roles in the life of a community, but are now recognised

not just as an amenity but as vital public health infrastructure, fundamental to health, wellbeing and physical activity, to tackling climate change and to benefitting and enhancing nature, where we can harness nature-based solutions and blue and green infrastructure for climate resilience and multiple other benefits in our urban areas.

- 3.20 It is intended that updates on progress for key themes within the Strategy can and will be reported through the range of governance routes available, which will include but not be limited to the Members' Library and East Lothian Partnership Governance Group and respective sub-groups. It is intended that there will be a Strategy mid-point review in year 5.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Open Space Strategy fulfils the statutory duty for local authorities set out in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, and it must be taken into consideration in the Local Development Planning process.
- 4.2 The OSS sets the strategic framework for open space in new developments that will guide and inform the preparation of detailed policies in the next Local Development Plan (LDP2).
- 4.3 The OSS aligns with other Council strategies and policies that aim to tackle the climate and nature emergencies and deliver enhancements to our communities.

5 RESOURCE AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Finance: There are no immediate financial implications from the Strategy or this report. Prioritising any improvements and or projects locally will be undertaken in partnership with local communities, key partners and other stakeholders and contained within existing budgets and or external funds. This may include alternative and blended funding mechanisms with a combination of public, private, philanthropic finance (e.g. new blended models of green finance), and aiming to attract future investment to ensure ongoing sustainable delivery of nature-based projects. Housing growth and LDP2 requirements will be captured through appropriate legal process including S75.
- 5.2 Human Resources: No direct implications arising from this report.
- 5.3 Other (e.g. Legal/IT): No direct implications arising from this report.
- 5.4 Risk: Nature-based solutions and greenspace/green infrastructure enhancements are cost-effective, local and vital solutions to help us tackle some of the critical challenges of our time – the climate and nature emergencies and health and obesity crisis. In regard to climate change adaptation alone, the risks of not taking action are far greater.

6 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 **Select the statement that is appropriate to your report by placing an 'X' in the relevant box.**

An Integrated Impact Assessment screening process has been undertaken and the subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on: equality and human rights; tackling socio-economic disadvantages and poverty; climate change, the environment and sustainability; the Council's role as a corporate parent; or the storage/collection of personal data.

☐

or

The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and impacts have been identified as follows:

☒

Subject	Impacts identified (Yes, No or N/A)
Equality and human rights	Yes
Socio-economic disadvantage/poverty	Yes
Climate change, the environment and sustainability	Yes
Corporate parenting and care-experienced young people	Yes
Storage/collection of personal data	No
Other	

The proposals in the strategy will have positive impacts by reducing inequalities, bringing local benefits, tackling climate change, enhancing nature, and benefiting people's health and wellbeing.

The Integrated Impact Assessment relating to this report has been published and can be accessed via the Council's website:

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/35550/east_lothian_open_space_strategy_2025_integrated_impact_assessment_iaa

6.2 A Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) Screening has also been undertaken. The CRWIA Screening report and

Child Friendly version have been published and can be accessed via the Council's website:

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/download/14065/amenity_services_integrated_impact_assessments_ias

7 APPENDICES

- 7.1 The East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2026 Summary Report is set out below.

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 The East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2026 also comprises the following, which are published in the Members' Library Service (Ref: 01/26, January 2026 Bulletin:

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/17581/members_library_service

- East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2026 Technical Report
- East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2026 Appendices 1 to 5:
 - Appendix 1: East Lothian Open Space Typology used for the Open Space Strategy and Audit
 - Appendix 2: Findings of Quality Assessment for each Cluster Area from the Open Space Audit 2024/25 for all open space sites audited (including both Council owned and privately owned sites)
 - Appendix 3: Summaries of the findings of East Lothian Open Space Audit by Cluster Area
 - Appendix 4: Open Space Sites included in the East Lothian Open Space Audit
 - Appendix 5: Respondents to the Public Consultation on the Draft East Lothian Open Space Strategy
- East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2026 Mapping

9 AUTHOR AND APPROVAL DETAILS

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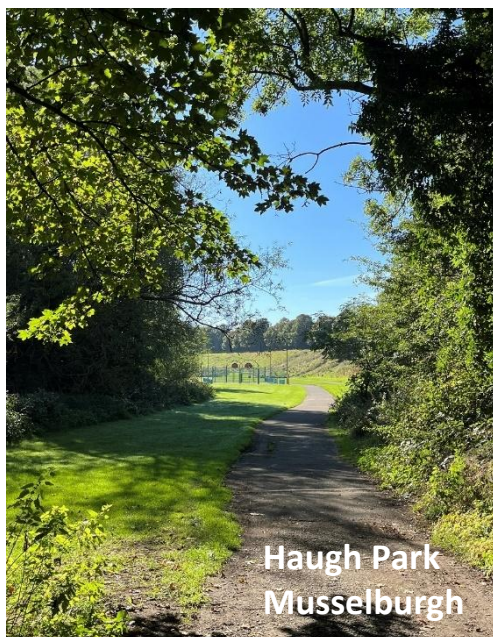
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Confirmation that IIA and other relevant checks (e.g. finance/legal) have been completed	Yes
Approval Date	17 December 2025

SUMMARY REPORT

EAST LoTHIAN OPEN SPACE STRATEGY 2026

A Strategic Framework for Parks, Greenspaces,
Sports Pitches and other Open Spaces
in East Lothian's Communities





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1.0 East Lothian Open Space Strategy



West Barns Memorial Park



1.1 East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2026

The ***East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2026*** sets out a 10-year strategic framework (2026–2036) for the development, enhancement and management of parks, greenspaces, sports pitches and other open spaces across East Lothian. It aims to:

- **Protect and enhance existing publicly accessible open spaces.**
- **Guide the provision of high-quality new open spaces.**
- **Address climate resilience, biodiversity, health and wellbeing, and social equity.**
- **Fulfil statutory obligations under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 and inform the next Local Development Plan.**

1.2 East Lothian's Parks and Open Spaces

East Lothian's parks, greenspaces, open spaces, civic spaces and sports areas are the green hearts of our communities, functioning as fundamental spaces to benefit people's health and wellbeing, to tackle climate change, and to support and enhance nature.

They form the character and setting of our towns and villages, provide places for outdoor play, sports and physical activity, social gathering, civic events, and local food growing, in the heart of our communities, and bring economic benefits to the area through tourism.

In addition, they are green places of nature networks, capturing (sequestering) and storing carbon, with trees and areas of natural habitat that provide shade in our hotter summers, reduce localised flooding, create homes for nature, and provide us with nature-based solutions in our urban areas.

East Lothian's parks, sports pitches and open spaces form a central part of the area's character, ranging from expanses of coastline to destination parks and play areas, from village greens to harbours and promenades.

1.3 What will change as a result of this strategy?

The **East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2026** introduces several significant enhancements from the previous version that will shape how parks, greenspaces, and other open spaces are managed and developed over the next decade.

By engaging with and listening to communities in informing this strategy we expect to see more people enjoying and benefiting from our open and green spaces.

The key changes and outcomes are:

- **Updated, evidence-led standards and requirements** for open space in East Lothian, informed by detailed audits of 462 sites and feedback from public consultation;
- **Stronger focus on climate, nature and health and wellbeing**, embedding climate resilience, nature enhancement, and health equity into open space management, planning and design;
- **Improvements and enhancements to open spaces**, informed by community engagement and involvement and embedding equity and inclusion, with a particular focus on open spaces most in need of improvement as identified through this strategy;
- **Specific commitments to improve greenspace quality and provision in more deprived areas and address barriers for particular groups** including minority ethnic communities, women and girls¹, older people, and those with disabilities, through community-informed infrastructure, amenity and nature-based enhancements;
- **Setting guidance to inform the next Local Development Plan**, to ensure provision of high-quality, multi-functional open spaces and green networks in new developments, guided by updated open space standards;
- **A framework to focus and prioritise the management and maintenance of open space**, ensuring that the Council has a clear strategic direction to its open space investment and asset management, and as a basis to seek and obtain funding for delivery through a range of funding mechanisms.

¹ In this document the term “women and girls” includes those who have identified as female and have responded to our consultation; where feedback has been provided by representatives of organisations, they have communicated information on behalf of the individuals from the demographic they represent.

1.4 Purpose and key roles of the East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2026

The purpose of this updated strategy is to review the provision, quantity, quality and accessibility of the public parks, greenspaces and open spaces within and on the edge of East Lothian's towns and villages.

The key roles of the East Lothian Open Space Strategy are to:

1. **Protect and enhance the publicly accessible open spaces that we have**
2. **Provide high quality new open spaces for the future**

The Open Space Strategy 2026 updates and refreshes the East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2018, setting out the new and updated national and local policy context, the practical differences and improvements that have taken place on the ground since the previous strategy, and an updated audit, assessment and mapping of the public open spaces across East Lothian's communities.

The refreshed strategy also emphasises that the need to protect and enhance our publicly accessible parks, greenspaces and other open spaces is greater than ever before, as we tackle the interlinked crises of the climate and nature emergencies, the social inequalities across our society and the public health need for places and spaces in our communities that benefit health and wellbeing.



Haugh Park, Musselburgh

Equitable access to greenspace is essential for reducing health inequalities. This strategy aims for local and equitable access to quality greenspace, to identify barriers, and to reflect the need for inclusive, barrier-free environments that serve all demographics, including those with disabilities, minority ethnic communities, and low-income households. This updated Strategy includes specific commitments to improve quality greenspace provision in deprived areas and prioritise investment where health inequalities are greatest. The strategy sets out revised and updated proposals on the development, maintenance and use of open spaces and green networks in East Lothian and proposals to meet future need and demand, and an evidence-based high-level Action Plan with monitoring and evaluation framework to guide delivery over the coming years. 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.

1.5 What does the strategy include?

For this updated East Lothian Open Space Strategy, **462 publicly accessible open spaces and greenspaces** were visited in towns and villages across East Lothian and a detailed audit of each of these sites was undertaken during 2024/25. These 462 sites included both Council owned/managed and privately owned/managed open spaces, within and on the edge of settlements. Many of these are new open spaces developed since the last East Lothian Open Space Strategy in 2018, delivered in new housing developments arising from the East Lothian Local Development Plan (LDP) 2018.

The Scottish Government's draft regulations on Open Space Strategies were followed in focusing on open spaces over 0.2 hectares in size, plus other smaller urban open spaces that have important functions locally, such as civic squares in town centres and neighbourhood playspaces.



Civic Square, Tranent

The open space audit information that was collected was analysed. A public consultation on the draft findings in the Draft East Lothian Open Space Strategy was undertaken, to obtain feedback from our communities on various aspects for the final Open Space Strategy. Data and findings from other recent relevant consultations undertaken by the Council, as well as direct engagement with organisations representing specific equality groups in East Lothian, were also incorporated into the findings to influence the final Open Space Strategy and ensure it represents the views of a range of people from across East Lothian.

The strategy presents the findings on the **Quantity, Quality and Accessibility** of a range of open space types across East Lothian's towns and villages. It also sets out evidence-based, revised and updated **proposals on the development, maintenance and use** of open spaces and green networks in East Lothian, and an Action Plan with monitoring and evaluation framework.

The strategy will provide those who use and manage open spaces with an up-to-date understanding of the open space resource that exists across the Council area, and presents an opportunity to assess strategically the needs and opportunities for open spaces and associated facilities.

1.6 The importance of Open Space and Greenspace

Parks, greenspaces and other open spaces are fundamental spaces in and around urban areas. They are essential for mitigating climate change and helping us to be more resilient to climate impacts; they create places for nature, benefitting both wildlife and people through connected nature networks; and they are fundamental to our health and wellbeing.

There is now a volume of scientific evidence demonstrating that access to local, quality green space improves the physical and mental health and wellbeing of all sections of the community, and that improving the availability of good quality green spaces across the social gradient will help reduce health inequalities. Greenspace is now recognised not just as an amenity, but as vital public health infrastructure.

Well managed and maintained greenspaces and other green infrastructure have been shown to enhance economic productivity, benefit tourism and the economy, and can foster local Community Wealth Building. They are fundamental spaces within '20 Minute Neighbourhoods' through their role in place-making and urban design, reinforce local landscape character, contribute to the character, heritage and distinctive identities of our towns and villages, and form important places for social gathering, civic events and reducing social isolation.



Community Forest Garden, Lindores Drive, Tranent

2.0 Aims, Vision & Key Objectives

2.1 Aims of the strategy

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 strengthen communities and create vibrant, liveable places where everyone benefits equally from accessible and safe 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 to ensure equitable access to quality green spaces.

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, high-quality, accessible and safe open spaces that will meet the needs of the community.

These standards are set out in proposals in the East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2026 that will inform the next Local Development Plan (currently in development), and will help ensure the requirements of National Planning Framework 4 are met.

2.2 Our Vision for East Lothian’s Open Spaces

*“East Lothian Council **will work collaboratively with our community partners to create greener, fairer, and healthier urban environments** in East Lothian; improving the climate resilience of our places, enhancing spaces and networks for nature, and enabling access for all to improved, safe and welcoming parks and green spaces, while building community wealth – benefiting people and nature alike for generations to come.”*

2.3 Strategy key themes & focus

Recognising the fundamental benefits that parks and urban greenspaces bring to our communities, the focus of the East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2026 is on protecting and enhancing our parks, greenspaces and other open spaces, and ensuring we create high quality open spaces for the future.

The Strategy aims to deliver outcomes based around three key interconnected and overarching themes:

❖ Climate

Mitigating climate change and increasing resilience to climate impacts

❖ Nature

Helping to tackle the Nature Emergency by protecting and enhancing nature networks and providing vital ecosystem services

❖ Health & Wellbeing

Fundamental spaces for encouraging healthy living, physical activity, social interaction and mental wellbeing

Interconnecting themes

Each of these key themes for the East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2026 are interlinked and interconnected, and should not be viewed or addressed in isolation as any action or intervention to improve or enhance one aspect should therefore also have benefits for the other connected elements.

Our parks and greenspaces are vitally important in addressing these three key interconnected elements and are at the heart of these vital and fundamental priorities in our local communities.



Community Engagement and Involvement

A 'golden thread' running through this strategy at every stage, to ensure these benefits are delivered in the best way to address local issues and enhance people's lives locally.

2.4 Strategy Outcomes

The Outcomes for the East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2026 have been determined with community input through feedback received during the public consultation on the Draft Open Space Strategy 2026. They are:

- **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**

3.0 Development of the 2026 strategy

3.1 Progress since 2018: Open Space Improvements 2018–2026

East Lothian Council has continued to deliver enhancements to parks, open spaces, civic spaces, play areas and sports pitches. A summary of the key enhancements and progress that have been delivered in Council owned/managed parks and greenspaces since the previous Open Space Strategy 2018 include:

- **Nature Network enhancements delivered in parks and greenspaces across every Cluster Area of East Lothian.**
- **Tree planting delivered in parks and greenspaces across the county, through**
 - **the Queen’s Green Canopy tree planting initiative and TreeTime East Lothian, a partnership project between the council and Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust,**
 - **trees planted at scale by East Lothian Countryside Rangers, Countryside Volunteers and Friends of Parks groups.**
- **Play Area renewals and new play areas delivered across East Lothian.**
- **New sports infrastructure delivered, including pump tracks, new sports pitches, and floodlighting of tennis courts.**
- **A community skatepark and a pump track delivered by community groups with Council support.**
- **New community food growing / allotment sites created.**
- **Community gardens, community woodlands and an orchard created on Council land in partnership with community groups.**
- **Paths and active travel improvements, including new cycle racks.**
- **Other parks infrastructure improvements including installation of seating, picnic tables and bins; drainage improvements to parks.**
- **Supporting national award-winning ‘In Bloom’ groups delivering high quality horticultural achievements and enhancing civic pride in our communities.**



Wildflower planting in Ormiston Park with 'Nature Networks East Lothian' signage

3.2 Open Space Audit 2024/25

The Open Space Audit 2024/25 included the audit of **462 open space sites**, including parks, greenspaces and sports pitches in the East Lothian Council urban and urban fringe areas to inform strategy development. These cover the six geographic Cluster Areas (based on the Area Partnerships areas) of Musselburgh, Tranent, Prestonpans, Haddington, North Berwick and Dunbar.

This included revisiting all of the sites audited in 2009 and 2016 to undertake updated audits, to reflect changes, enhancements and facilities upgrades since the 2016 audit. Some sites had deteriorated in quality or infrastructure had been removed since 2016, but the majority of sites had been improved or enhanced. In addition, a total of **135 new open space sites** were added in 2024/25.

The audited open space sites are all shown on the [interactive ArcGIS Online Map](#) (click on link to access).

Maps of all the audited open space sites within each Cluster Area of East Lothian are also shown in Maps 2a to 2f of the Open Space Strategy Mapping. Cluster Area Boundaries are shown in Map 1.

4.0 East Lothian Open Space Standards



The East Lothian Open Space Standard sets standards for quantity, quality and accessibility of publicly accessible open space across a range of PAN 65 typologies (open space types) that will ensure the standard offers clarity of application and can be monitored and evaluated over the life of the Open Space Strategy and Local Development Plan. It is intended to be a progressive standard, with improvements to open spaces undertaken over time and standards reviewed on a regular basis. Details of the standards are given in section 7 of the Open Space Strategy Technical Report.

4.1 Quantity Standard

East Lothian's **Quantity** Standard assesses if there is enough open space and if it is equitably distributed.

East Lothian Council sets a quantity standard for open space that requires all settlements to seek to secure, as a minimum, provision of 60m² of useable, public open space (including public parks, amenity greenspace, playspace) per household as follows:

East Lothian Open Space Quantity Standard:

The East Lothian Open Space Quantity Standard is provision of a minimum of 60m² of publicly accessible open space per dwelling.

Provision of formal and informal open space is expected, and should include large, consolidated areas of useable open space. Open spaces should be multifunctional and can include town and local parks, sports pitches, civic space, play provision and community growing space. Informal amenity open space should also be provided. Open Space provision will form a key part of the wider strategic Green Network.

In addition to the open space provision, there is a requirement for connected, high-quality and multi-functional green and blue infrastructure and green networks, avoiding fragmentation. This should include active travel routes, green corridors linking open spaces, woodlands and meadowlands, areas with biodiversity value and areas for seating and rest, sufficient, diverse landscaping and tree planting to support green network connectivity.

4.2 Quality Standard

East Lothian's Open Space **Quality** Standard assesses if the open space is 'fit for purpose'. Quality was assessed through the Open Space Audit process by scoring each open space using a defined set of quality criteria under the following categories:

- Access & Community
- Attractiveness / Place Appeal
- Biodiversity
- Functionality
- Community Benefits
- Tackling Climate Change

Fitness for purpose quality scoring for open spaces:

Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E
Score of 75% or more	Score of 65 - 74%	Score of 55 - 64%	Score of 45 - 54%	Score of less than 45%
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Failing
		<i>Fit for purpose</i>	<i>Not fit for purpose</i>	

Although quality scores of 55% are currently considered to be 'fit for purpose', the Council's aspiration is for town parks and local parks to achieve a minimum quality score of 70% and amenity greenspace to achieve a minimum quality score of 60%, over the duration of this Open Space Strategy.

East Lothian Open Space Quality Standard:

East Lothian Council sets a **quality standard** for open space that seeks to ensure all communities and settlements have access to high quality open space. All outdoor open space will score “fair”, “good” or “excellent” quality (band A, B or C). Any open space sites in either band D or E do not meet quality standards and are therefore not considered to be fit for purpose.

The Quality Standard aspiration is for all town and local parks to achieve a minimum quality score of 70% and amenity greenspace to achieve a minimum quality score of 60%, over the duration of this Open Space Strategy.

4.3 Accessibility Standard

East Lothian’s Open Space **Accessibility Standard** assesses if the open space is accessible to communities.

East Lothian Open Space Accessibility Standard:

East Lothian Council sets an **accessibility standard** for open space that seeks to ensure all communities and settlements have access to:

- Green Networks (semi-natural greenspaces, green corridors, other green space, countryside) within 300m
- Country Park (incl. non-designated country parks) within 10km
- A Town Park within 1.2km
- Local Park within 400m
- Regional Athletics facility within 36km
- Full Size Sports Pitch within 1.2km or within the Cluster Area as appropriate
- Either a Local Area of Play (LAP) within 240 metres, a Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) within 400 metres, or a Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play (NEAP) within 800 metres

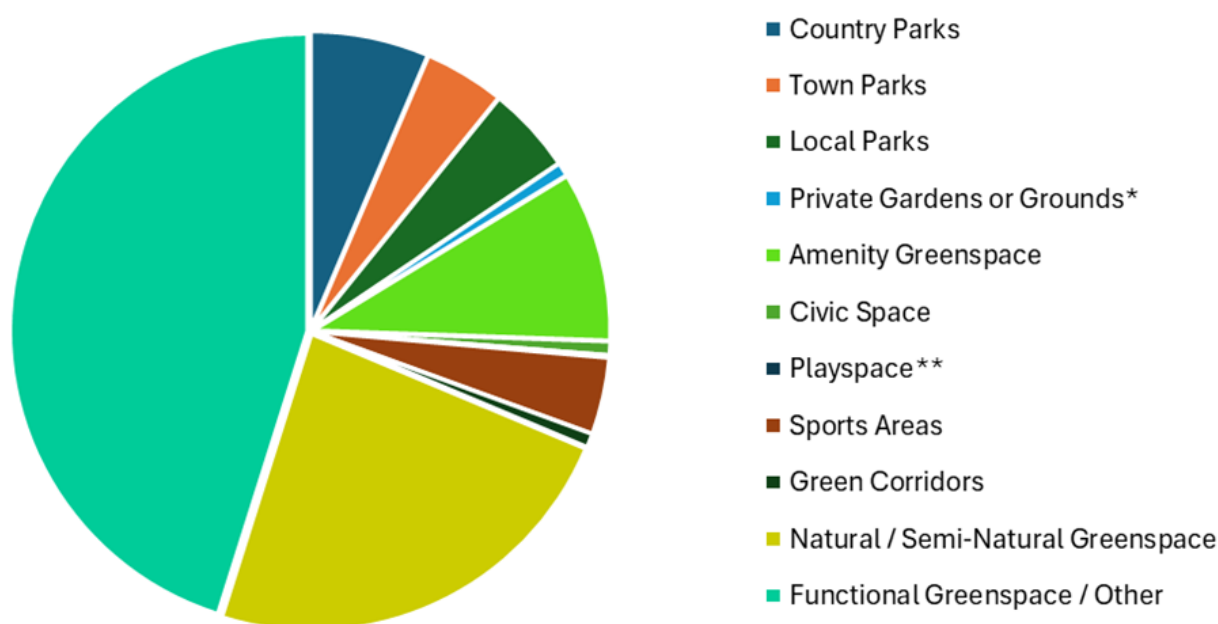
The accessibility standard for full size sports pitches remains 1.2km where appropriate. However, going forward this will be assessed on a Cluster basis, based on Local Development Plan future housing land allocations and subsequent demand assessment of cumulative impact within a Cluster Area. This new provision means that the Council will require developer contributions toward off-site full size sports pitch provision within the Cluster Area as a direct consequence of new housing development.

5.0 Application of the Quantity, Quality and Accessibility Standards to Open Spaces

5.1 Findings: Quantity of Open Space across East Lothian's Settlements

The total amount of open space included in the 2024/25 Open Space Audit, which includes new open spaces in recently developed housing sites, is **1,816.33 hectares**. This is divided between the following types of open space, both Council owned and privately owned:

Quantity of Different Open Space Types in Audit



* Private Gardens or Grounds are privately owned but accessible to the public.

** This is the area of Playspaces assessed in the Open Space Audit 2024/25. Please note that additional play areas were also assessed in the [East Lothian Play Sufficiency Assessment](#) or are incorporated within wider parks.

Across East Lothian as a whole, there is a good range and overall quantity of open spaces accessible to local residents, within and on the edge of the towns and larger villages.

For each Cluster Area of East Lothian, there is a good overall quantity and total area of open spaces accessible to the public.

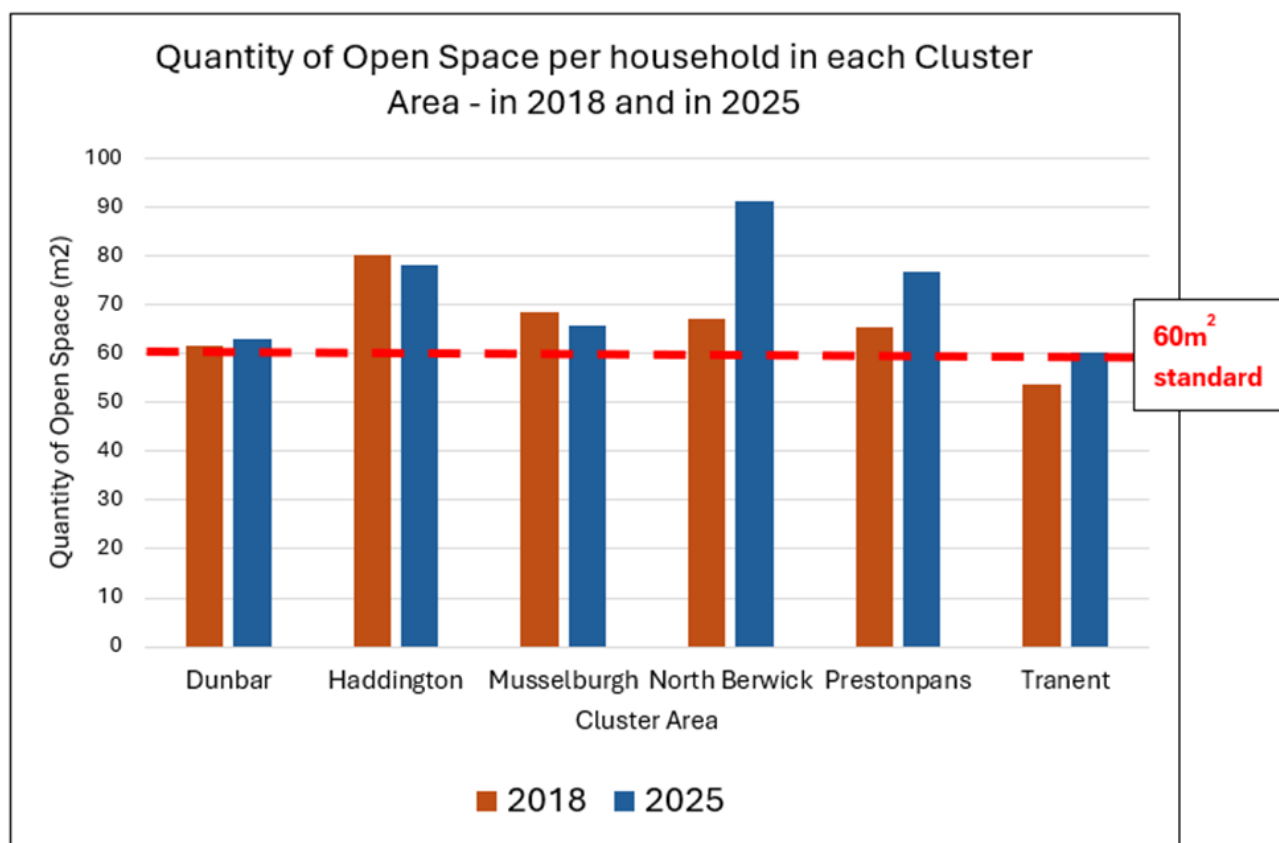
5.2 Findings of Cluster Analysis: Quantity of Parks & Gardens, Amenity Greenspace and Playspaces

The quantities of open space for each Cluster Area of East Lothian, identified and mapped through the 2024/25 Open Space Audit (refer to Maps 2a to 2f), are set out in the figure below.

It should be noted that across all Cluster Areas, in addition to the formal open spaces included and measured in the Open Space Audit 2024/25, there are also extensive areas of **landscaping, green connectivity between sites, and smaller pockets of amenity greenspaces within housing areas**, which form important aspects of the amenity, health and wellbeing, nature network, climate resilience and place-making benefits of an urban area.

Quantity of Open Space (public parks & gardens, amenity greenspaces and playspaces) per household for each Cluster Area: a comparison of 2018 and 2025 audit data.

The Open Space Standard of 60m² per household is shown as a red dashed line:



The **quantity** of open space (public parks and gardens, amenity greenspaces and equipped playspaces included in the Open Space Audit 2024/25) across the settlements in **each of East Lothian's Cluster Areas meets the Open Space Strategy quantity standard of 60m² per household**.

- This is an improvement from the 2018 Open Space Strategy, when it was shown that **Tranent Cluster** had less open space per household than the 60m² threshold in 2018.
- All other Cluster Areas also exceed the threshold, although **Dunbar Cluster** only achieves 63.16m² of open space per household.
- **Haddington and Musselburgh Clusters** both exceed the 60m² threshold, although both Clusters show slightly decreased amounts of public open space compared to the 2018 Open Space Audit.
- Positive increases in parks and greenspace provision per household were seen in both **Prestonpans and North Berwick Clusters**.

This analysis shows that quantity of open space for each Cluster Area of East Lothian meets the quantity standard of 60m² per household, although some areas only just surpass the threshold, and there are differences in the relative amounts of open space across Cluster Areas. Some Cluster Areas have relatively considerably more open space per household than the 60m² standard, and this is the aspiration to aim for across East Lothian.

Target: Ensure that the East Lothian Open Space Quantity Standard of provision of a minimum of 60m² per dwelling continues to be met and exceeded.

Ensure that, in addition to the open space provision, there is provision of connected, high-quality and multi-functional green and blue infrastructure and green networks, avoiding fragmentation.

5.3 Findings: Quality of Open Space across East Lothian's Settlements

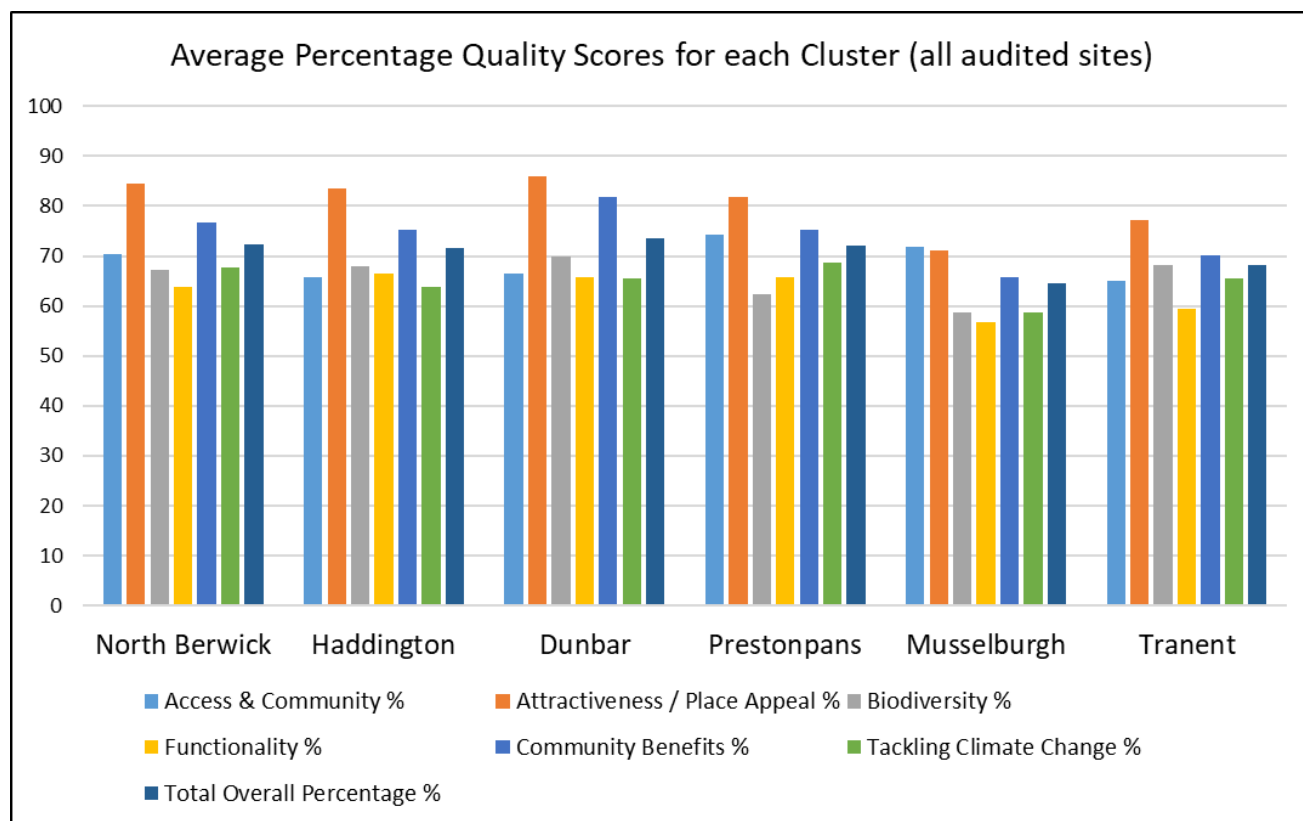
The detailed analysis of the Open Space Audit data showed that **across East Lothian as a whole, there are good quality open spaces of all types within and on the edge of settlements, and on average all areas of East Lothian meet the Open Space Quality Standard of 60% and above and therefore are 'fit for purpose' across the county as a whole.** The high standards of open spaces across all quality indicator categories show that the range of open space provision across East Lothian as a whole meets a range of purposes and needs, including across the key areas of climate, nature and health and wellbeing.

Overall, the quality category 'Attractiveness / Place Appeal' scored the highest average percentage score across all of East Lothian (79.2%), followed by 'Community Benefits' (average 72.9% across the county), emphasising the uniqueness, importance and place-making enhancements that these open spaces make to the places and community life of East Lothian. Feedback from the public consultation emphasised and highlighted this key point around the importance of local parks and greenspaces to our communities and how much these spaces are valued.

5.4 Findings: Quality of all Open Space by Cluster Area

Analysis was also undertaken of the Quality Scores for open spaces by Cluster Area. Detailed summaries of the percentage quality scores for all audited open spaces within and on the edge of all settlements in each Cluster of East Lothian is set out in Appendix 3 of the Technical Report.

Cluster Area Comparison of Quality Analysis Findings: all average percentage Quality Score findings for each Cluster Area (for all open space sites – both council and privately owned):



The open spaces in all Cluster Areas of East Lothian meet the 2018 Open Space Quality Standard of 55% and above. Most Cluster Areas also meet the new aspirational 60% Quality Standard and therefore are 'fit for purpose', although Musselburgh Cluster falls just short of the aspirational 60% standard for 3 categories and Tranent Cluster is just under 60% for one category. The majority of Public Parks and Gardens (89%) meet the higher 'parks quality score standard' of 65%, with a large proportion (82%) also meeting the new aspirational 70% quality score for Public Parks and Gardens.

Target: Ensure that the East Lothian Open Space Quality Standard is met and exceeded.

The Quality Standard aspiration is for all town and local parks to achieve a minimum quality score of 70% and amenity greenspace to achieve a minimum quality score of 60%, over the duration of this Open Space Strategy.

Ensure that all open spaces currently not meeting the standard are prioritised for enhancement, working with local communities and other key stakeholders.

Continue to maintain and enhance the current standards of management and maintenance to ensure our precious and valuable open spaces and greenspaces continue to benefit people across East Lothian, and to ensure that Quality Standards across East Lothian remain high in future.

5.5 Findings: Accessibility of Open Space across East Lothian's Settlements

The mapping of East Lothian's open spaces enabled analysis of the accessibility of East Lothian's public parks, playspaces and sports pitch provision by calculating the distances people have to travel actively from their homes, by walking / cycling / wheeling, to reach their nearest town park, local park, playspace or sports area.

Accessibility of open spaces within and on the edge of East Lothian's settlements meet the accessibility standards across the majority of areas of East Lothian, based on the distance threshold mapping exercise.

There is good accessibility of Public Parks close to where people live, however there are some gaps in provision in areas of Dunbar, North Berwick and Wallyford which do not meet the standards. Accessibility of Playspaces is generally good, however areas of North Berwick, Longniddry and Tranent do not meet the distance threshold criteria, and in general terms accessibility to play areas for disabled people is an area for improvement. All Sports Areas meet the accessibility standards across East Lothian.

The Cluster Area Mapping (Maps 3 to 7) and Cluster analysis in the Technical Report Appendix 3 provide details of the accessibility of the various types of open space by Cluster Area.

In addition, the following Key Priority Areas for accessibility have been identified through the Accessibility assessments combined with feedback from the public consultations:

- Improve paths and active travel links to reach parks, sports pitches and play spaces
- Improve active travel infrastructure, e.g. cycle racks
- Improve lighting, signage and promotion of parks, and entrances to parks
- Improve accessibility for disabled people and those with mobility issues
- Investigate opportunities in smaller rural communities to improve and deliver accessible parks and greenspaces



Memorial Garden, Aberlady

5.6 Findings: Community Involvement in Parks & Greenspaces

Many of East Lothian's parks and greenspaces, as well as Countryside Sites, have 'Friends Of' or 'In Bloom' groups, or other community voluntary organisations, associated with them, whose members make a huge difference to enhancing these greenspaces. The health, wellbeing and social benefits of being active and involved in local greenspaces are well documented, and these spaces and indeed local communities benefit hugely from community engagement and input into their local management and amenity value.

A third of respondents (33%) to the public consultation said that they do have involvement with East Lothian parks/greenspaces, including through 'Friends Of' parks groups, community gardening groups, East Lothian Conservation Volunteers, litter-picking and beach cleaning groups.

6.0 Strategic Management Proposals for Open Spaces and Green Infrastructure

The Open Space Audit 2024/25 quantity, quality and accessibility assessments and the findings from the public consultation on the Draft Open Space Strategy 2026 have identified important aspects to be addressed in the ongoing management of existing open spaces, green networks and green infrastructure across the county, and for new open spaces in future housing development sites, to ensure they meet the **Outcomes** set out in the Open Space Strategy 2026.

The Open Space Strategy sets out a summary of these findings, in particular the public's views, on what is needed to further improve and enhance our open spaces, ensuring the key overarching, interconnected themes of **Climate, Nature and Health and Wellbeing** are addressed.

Key Priority Areas for management actions and for future open spaces have been identified through rigorous quality assessment combined with feedback from public consultations and these form the basis of proposals and an **Action Plan**, aiming to **protect, enhance and create open space and greenspace that is fit for purpose to ensure it delivers these functions**. The Action Plan is set out in section 12 of the Technical Report.

The 'golden thread' running through all of these strategic proposals is

❖ Community Engagement & Involvement

Target: Community Engagement and Involvement in Open Spaces:

- Future management of open spaces should be undertaken in partnership with local people, community groups and user groups, taking into account their views and the overall priorities identified through the public consultation on the Open Space Strategy, to ensure open spaces are fit for purpose to address a range of needs.
- Enhancing greenspaces in collaboration with the community increases community use and benefit and also supports the pillars of East Lothian Community Wealth Building, including Land/Assets and Climate Change.



6.1 Future Management Priorities to enhance Quality and Accessibility of open spaces, identified through the Open Space Audit and Public Consultation

Through the public consultation on the Draft Open Space Strategy 2026, people's views were gathered to understand barriers to use and enjoyment of their local parks and greenspaces in order to inform future requirements and future management of urban parks and greenspaces. Direct engagement with representatives of specific groups (in particular organisations representing people from ethnic minority backgrounds and women and girls) enhanced the feedback received and ensured their views were heard.

The importance of engaging with local people, wider stakeholders, and particularly specific groups who may be impacted, including those who have protected characteristics, was highlighted in the public consultation.

- Equality in access to parks was mentioned by several respondents, particularly the need to consider difference in preference, needs and safety.
- The consultation identified barriers to accessing greenspace beyond physical access. There is a need to identify and address non-physical barriers, such as racism, cultural exclusion and gendered safety concerns when improving parks and greenspaces.
- The recent East Lothian Play Sufficiency Assessment showed 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.

Respondents told us that in order to improve their use of parks/open space there is a need for:

- Better lighting and spaces that feel safe to be in when it is dark or getting dark
- Better paths and access routes to reach the park/open space
- More varied spaces that can be used by a wider variety of people from a range of ages, abilities and backgrounds
- Public activities and events taking place that encourage people of all ages into the space
- Dog access management / better enforcement / dog control / dog free areas
- Cycling / active travel infrastructure including cycle racks
- Better seating, including seating for groups and shelter, hang-out spaces
- Hedges and landscaping around park/open space
- Public toilet access

Comments received were less about current maintenance and more about lack of infrastructure (particularly active travel routes/infrastructure, lighting, seating and provision to address the needs of specific groups including teenagers, older people, and people with disabilities / mobility issues), and public activities, events and behaviour such as irresponsible dog walking, addressing issues for specific parks and greenspaces on a case-by-case basis to ensure appropriate improvements that meet local needs.

6.2 Public Priorities for Public Parks & Greenspace Improvements & Enhancements

The following priorities for East Lothian Public Parks and Greenspace enhancements and improvements were identified through public consultation, in priority order:

Priority	Parks & Greenspace Enhancement Option	Percentage of respondents who prioritised this option
1	Nature areas (such as wildflower areas, nature trails)	85%
2	Trees	79%
3	Open areas of grass for multi-use, informal recreation / enjoying the outdoors	75%
4=	Seating	66%
4=	Good paths and access routes	66%
6	Landscaping including shrubs, hedges, planting, flowerbeds	48%
7=	Play equipment	39%
7=	Local food growing areas / allotments	39%
9	Lighting along paths	28%
10	Signage / information panels	21%
11	Outdoor gym / exercise equipment	16%
12	Artwork / sculpture or other focal point	13%

Additional comments received through the public consultation strongly identified Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation as a key priority for East Lothian's parks and greenspaces, with several respondents stating they think this is the most important outcome that our parks and greenspaces should deliver.

Social and cultural barriers can prevent people including minority ethnic communities and other marginalised groups from using greenspaces, even when physically accessible, therefore there is a need to consider access holistically, not only in terms of infrastructure.



Community Garden at Prestonpans Community Centre

6.3 Principles for the Development, Maintenance and Use of Parks, Greenspaces and other Open Spaces in East Lothian

The development, maintenance and use of parks, greenspaces and other open spaces in East Lothian should be guided by the following good-practice principles:

- Ensuring that local communities are involved in making decisions about improvements to their local parks and greenspaces;
- Enabling more people to visit, use and feel welcome in our parks and open spaces;
- Ensuring that our parks and greenspaces are accessible to all, taking particular note of requirements for specific groups including people with disabilities or other mobility issues, women and girls, older people, those with protected characteristics, and ensuring the voices of children and young people are heard;
- Encouraging and supporting the involvement of local people, groups and organisations in the management of their local parks and greenspaces;
- Ensuring that management of parks and greenspaces delivers the Outcomes of this strategy, based in particular around the key themes of Climate, Nature and Health and Wellbeing;
- Ensuring that development proposals will meet with environmental, biodiversity and sustainability requirements and obligations.



6.4 Key Priorities for Improvements and Enhancements to Existing Parks and Greenspaces and to Incorporate in New Parks & Greenspaces

Feedback obtained through the range of public consultations used as sources for the Open Space Strategy has strongly highlighted the importance and value that the public place on parks, greenspaces and open spaces in their communities, the important roles these spaces play in climate change resilience, protecting and enhancing nature, making better places to live in, and a particular emphasis on the health and wellbeing aspects of open spaces to them as individuals and to society. The need to protect our existing parks and open spaces was a key aspect highlighted by respondents.

Key management priorities identified through the Open Space Strategy Audit and Public Consultation for the development, maintenance and use of parks, open spaces and other green infrastructure:

- Enhanced Nature Network biodiversity enhancement projects;
- Enhancing climate resilience, developing and delivering nature-based solutions including green and blue infrastructure enhancements;
- Ensuring that open areas of grass for multi-use, informal recreation and enjoying the outdoors are delivered and protected, for health, wellbeing and physical activity;
- Improving and enhancing facilities to ensure everyone can benefit, including facilities for people with a range of protected characteristics, and a range of ages and abilities including disabilities;
- Improving seating – ensuring sufficient seating of the right types in the right places, including hang-out spaces and shelter;
- Improving paths and access, particularly for people with a range of abilities including disabilities, ensuring connectivity, signage / promotion and lighting, as appropriate;
- Increasing active travel infrastructure including cycle racks;
- Supporting community events in local parks, encouraging social gathering and social cohesion;
- Implementing suitable play area enhancements, outdoor gym/exercise equipment, allotments / community food growing spaces as appropriate, with community input and engagement, and as funding permits;
- Addressing management of dogs in public open spaces and encouraging responsible dog ownership;
- Putting in place sustainable funding mechanisms to ensure deliverability of proposals and projects and ongoing maintenance.

6.5 Key Management Issues, Actions and Solutions

Safety: Aiming for safer, more welcoming and more inclusive parks & greenspaces

Perceived and actual safety are critical for encouraging physical activity, mental wellbeing, and social cohesion in open spaces.

ACTION: Park Management Plans, to address issues such as safety, for specific key parks should be co-produced with input from different user groups, including those with protected characteristics, community representatives and other key stakeholders including the Community Safety Group, and taking into consideration the range of park management priorities including the need to balance access and lighting with areas for nature and wildlife.

Access Routes / Paths / Active Travel Improvements

The need for improvements to paths and active travel routes within and connecting to parks and greenspaces, particularly to enable access for people of all abilities, was highlighted across the findings of the Open Space Audit, accessibility assessments and public consultation feedback.

ACTION: Continue to implement active travel routes, increase the path network and undertake path improvements where funding permits, in consultation with communities and other stakeholders, to improve accessibility of parks, greenspaces and other open space areas as appropriate.

Provision of seating and other facilities in parks and greenspaces, for a range of abilities including disabilities

ACTION: Work with local communities, key focus groups with particular needs and other key stakeholders to identify suitable locations for additional seating and other specific improvements that will enable people with a range of abilities, including those with disabilities and mobility issues, to use and enjoy our parks and greenspaces.

Specific audits with key user groups and stakeholders should be undertaken for specific parks and greenspaces to identify facilities to improve accessibility for people with disabilities, and should form part of Park Management Plans, as a basis to seek and obtain funding for improvements.

Expand nature network enhancements for biodiversity and climate resilience

ACTION: Continue to expand Nature Networks in suitable locations in parks and greenspaces across East Lothian, with advice from the Biodiversity Officer and community input and feedback, to increase coverage of Nature Network enhancements and create connected 'stepping stones' for nature, as funding becomes available. Incorporate this into Park Management Plans.

Dogs in parks and greenspaces

ACTION: Set up a Working Group, involving local community representatives and other key stakeholders, to investigate the issue of irresponsible dog ownership impacting on parks and greenspaces and potential management solutions.

Climate change adaptation and resilience, including flooding and coastal change impacts

Climate change is already impacting on us, and it is imperative that we adapt our towns and urban areas to increase resilience to its impacts.

ACTION: Our parks and greenspaces are important for the climate resilience of our urban areas. Work with Flood Protection officers and other key stakeholders to identify nature-based solutions where possible, supported by our communities, where funding will make this possible.

Adaptation of our parks and greenspaces to reduce impacts of flooding and coastal erosion, is necessary to protect our open spaces for the future.

6.6 Funding: Management Opportunities and Proposals

Proposal: Explore alternative funding mechanisms for Council parks and open space

Continue to explore alternative and blended funding mechanisms, combining public, private, philanthropic and community sources, to support parks and greenspace projects, developed in collaboration with our communities, that deliver multi-functional benefits, and aim to attract future investment to ensure sustainable delivery of nature-based projects. This could include:

- Positioning ‘shovel-ready’ projects to access external investment;
- Working with local businesses and anchor institutions to secure corporate sponsorship, Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) / Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) contributions and natural capital investment;
- Exploring further the opportunities for Community Benefits arising through the Council’s procurement process, to deliver community-identified actions locally in the areas where they are most needed;
- Ensuring developer contributions through Section 75 agreements are fully aligned with open space standards and long-term management; and
- Embedding Community Wealth Building principles so that local enterprises, social enterprises and community organisations can benefit directly from contracts, skills pathways and stewardship roles.

Proposal: Work with partners to identify and deliver actions in privately owned open spaces

Work with partners to identify and deliver actions in privately owned open spaces, and explore opportunities for funding including Community Benefits and Community Wealth Building in privately owned spaces.

Explore how best to work with key stakeholders, including developers, Housing Associations, Factors and residents, and develop mechanisms to improve the quality standards of privately owned open spaces where needed/appropriate, focusing on priority sites.

Proposal: Strengthen Developer Contributions for Open Space

The Council will ensure that all new developments deliver high-quality, accessible open space and green networks, proportional to the scale of the development, in line with Council standards. Off-site enhancement, through the use of developer contributions (Section 75 agreements), may be considered on a case-by-case basis. A ‘Developer Contribution Protocol’, incorporated in the next Local Development Plan and associated documentation, will be prepared, providing guidance on how developer contributions can be secured to enhance existing parks in the vicinity, the types of new development this applies to and the number of houses / units that will trigger the requirement.

Proposal: Embedding Community Wealth Building in Open Space Delivery

Open space investment and management will be used as a practical driver of Community Wealth Building across East Lothian. This approach will ensure that every pound invested in parks and greenspaces delivers wider economic, social and environmental value for East Lothian’s communities.

Proposal: Open Spaces as Drivers of Tourism and Place Economy

East Lothian’s parks, coastlines, and open spaces are vital to the visitor economy, supporting sport, cultural events, heritage activity and outdoor recreation. Investment in open spaces will be planned to maximise their contribution to the local economy.

7.0 Application of Quantity, Quality & Accessibility Standards for each Type of Open Space

The open space standards were applied to the East Lothian open spaces and provision of open spaces and sports pitches analysed by Open Space Type, incorporating feedback from the public consultation where applicable. Each open space site was mapped into a GIS system.

The full strategy Technical Report, Appendices and Mapping provide the detailed analysis of open space and sports provision and a summary for each of the six **Cluster Areas**:

- **Dunbar Cluster**
- **Haddington Cluster**
- **Musselburgh Cluster**
- **North Berwick Cluster**
- **Prestonpans Cluster**
- **Tranent Cluster**

Summary of the Findings of the Cluster Based Quantity, Quality and Accessibility Analysis for the various Open Space Types:

Cluster Area	Green Networks	Parks and Gardens			Amenity Greenspace	Playspaces	Sports Areas
	Accessibility	Quantity	Quality	Accessibility	Quality	Accessibility	Accessibility
Dunbar	YES	YES	YES	NO*	YES	YES	YES
Haddington	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Musselburgh	YES	YES	YES	NO*	YES	YES	YES
North Berwick	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
Prestonpans	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO*	YES
Tranent	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES

* Construction still underway in new housing developments

KEY:

YES	Cluster meets standards
NO	Some area(s) of Cluster are outwith accessibility distance thresholds, however, there are areas of new housing development still under construction with new greenspaces / play areas still to be delivered; and/or new play areas in development
NO	Some area(s) of Cluster are outwith accessibility distance thresholds, however, these are historic issues due to layout of older parts of the town with no opportunity for retrofitting new greenspaces

7.1 Green Networks

The Green Network integrates biodiversity, landscaping, active travel, flood mitigation, open space and climate change adaptation and other relevant interests. It is made up of green spaces (parks, public spaces, trees and woodlands, designated sites, etc.) and blue spaces (rivers, streams wetlands and SuDS, etc.). East Lothian's Strategic Green Network is shown in Map 7 of the Open Space Strategy Mapping.

All areas of East Lothian meet the standard for accessibility to Green Networks across East Lothian.

Future Development Recommendations for Green Networks

Continue to ensure that the Green Network is protected and enhanced, through management, enforcement of legislation for protected species and habitats, and through the planning process. The Council will ensure that all new developments contribute to the provision of Green Networks, as part of on-site provision and through the use of Section 75 agreements, where appropriate and in line with planning policy.



View from River Tyne Path, Haddington

7.2 Public Parks & Gardens

Quantity

The application of the East Lothian quantity standard for Public Parks and Gardens concludes that all Cluster Areas of East Lothian meet the quantity standard.

Quality

In terms of quality of Public Parks and Gardens all Cluster Areas reasonably meet the East Lothian Standard, with the majority of parks (89%) scoring over 65%. A large proportion (82%) also meet the new aspirational 70% quality score for Public Parks and Gardens. Musselburgh, Old Craighall, Wallyford, Whitecraig, Prestonpans, Elphinstone and Tranent each have one park that does not meet the 65% quality standard. Four of these sites are located within the Musselburgh Cluster and two within Tranent Cluster; these parks will be a priority for targeting improvements and enhancements, as funding opportunities allow. However, as these parks are each located in different settlements it has been concluded that each Cluster reasonably meets the quality standard.



Neilson Park, Haddington

The Council owned/managed parks below the quality standard should be a **management priority for future improvement**, as funding opportunities allow, ensuring local community engagement and involvement.

The quality scores for all of the parks included in the audit ranged from 55% to 95%, with the majority of sites scoring in the 70's and 80's. There are 58 out of 65 (i.e. 89%) high quality parks that meet the standard (scoring above 65%). Across all Cluster Areas of East Lothian, the quality scores are generally very high, showing the high standards for the majority of public parks across East Lothian.

Accessibility

Across East Lothian there is generally good provision of public parks and gardens, with the majority of larger towns and villages meeting accessibility standards.

In terms of provision of Town Parks East Lothian is well provided for in the larger settlements, with the majority of residents living within 1.2km of a park. The combination of Town Parks and Local Parks across the county ensures that most residential areas in East Lothian's towns and villages are within the catchment of a park. The residential areas out with these catchments, which do not fully meet parks accessibility standards, include: the north-west of North Berwick, the south-eastern area of Dunbar, and the eastern and south-eastern area of Wallyford. However, these areas include new housing development sites that are still under construction.

Future Development Recommendations

The Council will ensure that new developments contribute to the provision of parks on-site, appropriate to the scale of the development. Off-site enhancement, using Section 75 agreements, may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

7.3 Amenity Greenspace

Definition

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. These green spaces are predominantly located in and around housing areas, and are of huge importance to the settings, amenity value, nature value and climate adaption of urban areas. As outdoor spaces close to where people live, they are accessed daily by many people, and have important health, wellbeing and physical activity benefits.



Amenity greenspace in Tranent

Quality

In terms of quality of Amenity Greenspace, all Clusters meet the East Lothian Standard with regard to the average quality standard of minimum 55% and above, although the aspiration is for all sites to reach 60%. The majority of sites meet the quality standard. However, quality scores for individual sites ranged from 89% to 35%. Within Musselburgh Cluster, for example, scores ranged from 88% to 35%.

Management Focus and Development Proposals

Continue to ensure that Amenity Greenspaces are protected and enhanced, through management and through the planning process, with a focus on greenspaces that are currently failing the Quality standard, particularly those in more deprived areas to help ensure equality. These should be prioritised for improvement, as funding allows, in collaboration with local communities to ensure they meet local needs. Retrofitting projects to create new green spaces, such as the Council's 'Greening the Grey' project in ELC Housing areas, are supported.

New Development

Ensure that all new developments enhance green connectivity and accessibility by ensuring on-site provision of sufficient, good quality Amenity Greenspaces within housing areas, and ensuring equity of greenspace provision across all housing types/tenures.

7.4 Civic Spaces

As part of the landscape and place-making value, civic function, historic significance, green and blue network connectivity of a town or village, Civic Spaces are fundamental urban open spaces that are important to the civic life of a settlement.

Management Focus and Development Proposals

Civic spaces should be a focus for community collaboration and priority for enhancement for civic pride, social cohesion and as community gathering spaces and focal points. New developments should consider the incorporation of centrally located civic spaces as part of the wider open space / parks and greenspace provision of a development.

7.5 Sports Areas / Sports Pitches

The Council continues to maintain and develop facilities for sport, ensuring an appropriate distribution of sports pitches across East Lothian to meet local need.

East Lothian Standard for Sports Areas

An assessment of future need will be undertaken to assess the requirements for sports provision based on the anticipated housing allocations and locations identified in the emerging new Local Development Plan (LDP2). The review will be based on a robust demand-led model, which will identify where new sports pitches are required or upgrading of existing pitches / associated facilities is required as part of any future proposed development through the LDP2 process.

The delivery of sports pitch provision will be monitored, reviewed and updated every 2 years through the LDP Delivery Programme.

East Lothian Standard 2026 for Sports Pitches / Sports Areas

SPORTS AREAS		
Quantity	Quality	Accessibility
Based on LDP future land allocations and subsequent demand assessment of cumulative impact within a Cluster Area	Aim to improve the Quality of sports pitches through enhancement, based on 'hierarchy of need'	Regional Athletics = 36km Full size sports pitches = 1.2km or within the Cluster Area as appropriate Small size sports pitches = 400m

Quality

East Lothian Council has been and will continue working towards the rationalisation of the current pitch provision to create multi-pitch sites associated with a number of different sports to help reduce maintenance costs, whilst increasing the quality of the sports facilities. In some cases this has resulted in an increase of the useability of the existing pitches, therefore increasing the season available for a particular sport.

The Council will ensure that pitch provision in the Council area is sufficient to meet the needs of local residents now and in the future through a **'Hierarchy of Need'**, ensuring all new developments comply with the standards and contribute to the provision of outdoor sports facilities (including changing facilities) and land to develop recreational facilities to meet the needs of residents, through the use of Section 75 agreements.

Accessibility

Assessment of Sports Provision across East Lothian using the new Accessibility standards indicates that all settlements of East Lothian meet the Sports Pitch Provision Standards.

7.6 Playspaces and Equipped Play Areas

The **East Lothian Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA)**, approved by the Council in 2024, sets out the detailed assessment of the quality, quantity and accessibility of East Lothian Play Areas (both privately owned/managed and Council owned/managed).

Accessibility of Equipped Play Areas across East Lothian: Distance thresholds

Overall, Play Areas are well distributed across East Lothian, with most settlements meeting the LAP, LEAP and NEAP playspaces accessibility standards.

Most areas of East Lothian have good provision of Play Areas, however the PSA identifies key targets and recommendations for improvement.



Lauderdale Park Play Area, Dunbar

Future Development Recommendations for Playspaces

East Lothian Council will continue to deliver Equipped Play Areas and local playspaces that are fit for purpose, and meet local needs, in appropriate locations close to where people live.

Future playspace developments should:

- Meet the recommendations in the East Lothian Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA)
- Detailed requirements are set out in the Open Space Strategy Technical Report.

New Developments

The Council will ensure that all new developments either provide suitable play areas / playspaces within their development sites, proportional to the scale of the development, and/or contribute to the provision of play spaces through legal agreements.

7.7 Allotments and Community Growing Spaces

Definition

Areas of land for growing vegetables, fruit and other plants, either in individual plots within formal allotment sites or in communal community growing spaces, including orchards.

East Lothian Council's Food Growing Strategy and Local Development Plan process

An Allotments and Local Food Growing Strategy for East Lothian is currently in early stages of development by the Council and will be delivered through stakeholder and community engagement and consultation. The Allotment and Local Food Growing Strategy will provide details and analysis of current demand and future provision of allotments.

Demand-Led Assessment

East Lothian currently has 124 Council-owned allotment plots with more in development. At present there are extensive historical waiting lists for allotments which are currently being updated to reflect present demand. The current demand for allotment space is mainly concentrated in the larger towns.



Community growing site, Musselburgh

The current Local Development Plan 2018 (LDP 2018) states that the Council's allotment strategy will seek to prioritise provision of allotment space for each cluster area within each cluster area as deemed necessary. In the event cluster provision is not possible the Council will provide allotment space at local authority level.

Future Development Requirements for Allotments and Community Food Growing Spaces

- New allotment provision and community growing space is required in all Cluster Areas, in each of the larger towns but also in the smaller towns and villages.
- Future provision could include re-purposing of existing open space, including amenity greenspaces near to housing, into community gardens / community growing space according to community demand and where there is no conflicting or competing use.
- In smaller rural communities, consider options to support residents to work with private landowners to identify potentially suitable sites.

New Developments

Consideration will be given to the provision of future allotment sites and community growing spaces through development work of the next Local Development Plan.

7.8 Cemeteries and Churchyards

A comprehensive Open Space audit of East Lothian's publicly accessible cemeteries and churchyards was undertaken for the first time as part of the Open Space Audit 2024/25.

Burial Ground Strategy and Future Cemetery Provision

East Lothian Council has a statutory duty to provide burial grounds and must plan for future provision. The Council has a **Burial Ground Strategy** (2015), which sets out the strategy for the provision and management of burial grounds across the county, including plans for future provision to ensure adequate supply of burial space in East Lothian.

New Burial Space Provision

- The provision of burial space within each individual town and large village will be prioritised, and in the event such local provision is not possible the Council will provide burial space at Cluster level.
- Demand for new lair spaces and cemetery sites requires to be addressed. Consideration will be given to the provision of future burial ground space through development work of the next Local Development Plan.

8.0 Proposals and Guidance for Open Space in New Developments

The Open Space Audit 2024/25 included assessment of open spaces in new and recent housing development sites. The findings of the Audit, combined with the public feedback on the Draft Open Space Strategy, have enabled the development of **proposals / guiding principles and requirements** for the quantity, quality and accessibility of new open spaces in future developments.

The Open Space Strategy sets the strategic framework for open space in new developments that will guide and inform the preparation of detailed policies in the next **Local Development Plan** (LDP2). The detailed policies and priorities for open space in new developments will be developed through the LDP2 iterative process.

The Open Space Strategy

- provides a strategic framework to inform LDP2
- contains proposals / guiding principles, including on
 - Minimum open space quantity and quality thresholds and requirements for new developments, for provision of high quality, useable, multi-functional open space across a development site, and including potentially allotments, community food growing spaces and cemetery space
 - Importance of green infrastructure connectivity / landscaping in addition to the 'useable open spaces'
 - Phasing the delivery of open space in new developments
 - Principles / conditions for accepting off-site contributions in lieu of on-site provision

The next Local Development Plan (LDP2)

- will contain the detailed policies for implementation
 - The policies in LDP2 will be informed by the Open Space Strategy
 - These will include policies on open space, but also on other matters, e.g. design, biodiversity etc.

The Open Space Strategy Technical Report includes:

- **Requirements and Expectations for Open Space in New Developments**
- **Principles for Open Space in New Developments**
- **Quantity, Quality and Accessibility Standards for Open Space for New Developments**



Pinkie Park, Pinkie Braes, Musselburgh

Guidelines for Development: Open Space Requirements for New Development

This section of the Open Space Strategy Technical Report sets out guidelines and requirements for open space in new developments in East Lothian, which will guide and inform the preparation of detailed policies in the next Local Development Plan (LDP2). This section of the Technical Report includes:

- **Guidance on required open space provision for new developments of different scales and types;**
- **Key Priorities for open space expected in new developments in East Lothian;**
- **Green Infrastructure requirements and expectations for new developments;**
- **Phasing the delivery of open space in new developments.**

9.0 Action Plan

The East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2026 will be implemented through the Action Plan which provides strategic objectives and associated tasks. The Plan has been created to be undertaken over a 10-year period but will require updating as changes occur. The Action Plan is set out in section 12 of the Technical Report.

Actions are linked to addressing specific Outcomes of the Strategy, and are set out under the focus areas of:

- **Community Engagement and Involvement**
- **Equitable Access to Quality Green Spaces**
- **Effective Partnership Working**
- **Healthier Communities**
- **Climate Resilient Places – Tackling the Climate Emergency**
- **Protect and Enhance Biodiversity – Tackling the Nature Emergency**
- **High Quality Network of Open Spaces**
- **Enhance Green Network Capacity and Connectivity**
- **Sustainable Growth and Development**
- **Effective Management of Open Space including Infrastructure Improvements**

10.0 Next Steps

10.1 Delivery

The Open Space Strategy is intended to provide the Council's Open Space managers with a 'tool' to focus and prioritise the management of open space, ensuring that the Council has a clear strategic direction to its open space investment and asset management, and as a basis to seek and obtain funding for delivery.

The Open Space Strategy aligns with key Council priorities. Working collaboratively with and involving our communities and other key partners and stakeholders, to prioritise equitable and inclusive open space improvements in Cluster Areas, will be a key delivery mechanism for the Open Space Strategy.

10.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

Best practice recommends that a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework should be set up to establish a formal and measurable process to record outputs and outcomes. It is vital that the Open Space Strategy becomes a part of the day-to-day management of the Council's open space resource.

The monitoring process should address the following issues:

- Open Space Audit
- Stakeholder and community engagement
- Capital and funding programme
- Prioritised open space quality improvements
- User satisfaction and feedback

Changes to the open space resource and updating of the Open Space Audit database will be monitored and recorded through the Change Log, adding new sites / recording improvements. A log of new and consented open space sites will be maintained (with accompanying mapping), that will inform the Open Space Strategy reviews.

The evaluation will inform the Open Space Strategy and Action Plan updates.

It is intended that updates on progress for key themes within the Strategy can and will be reported through the range of governance routes available, which will include but not be limited to the Members' Library and East Lothian Partnership Governance Group and respective sub-groups. It is intended that there will be a Strategy mid-point review in year 5.

10.3 Full Version of the Open Space Strategy

The full version of the East Lothian Open Space Strategy 2026 is available on East Lothian Council's website and comprises the following parts:

Technical Report

Detailed Mapping (Maps 1 to 7)

Appendix 1: East Lothian Open Space Typology used for the Open Space Strategy and Audit

Appendix 2: Findings of Quality Assessment for each Cluster Area from the Open Space Audit 2024/25 for all open space sites audited (including both Council owned and privately owned sites)

Appendix 3: Summaries of the findings of East Lothian Open Space Audit by Cluster Area

Appendix 4: Open Space Sites included in the East Lothian Open Space Audit

Appendix 5: Respondents to the Public Consultation on the Draft East Lothian Open Space Strategy

This strategy can be provided in Braille,
large print, audiotape, or your own language.

For assistance please call **01620 827 827**

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contact us via www.contactscotland-bsl.org

Report produced by

East Lothian Council's Amenity Services, with Planning Service and input from officers
across Council Service Areas including the Climate and Nature Emergency Group.

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Open Space Strategy

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