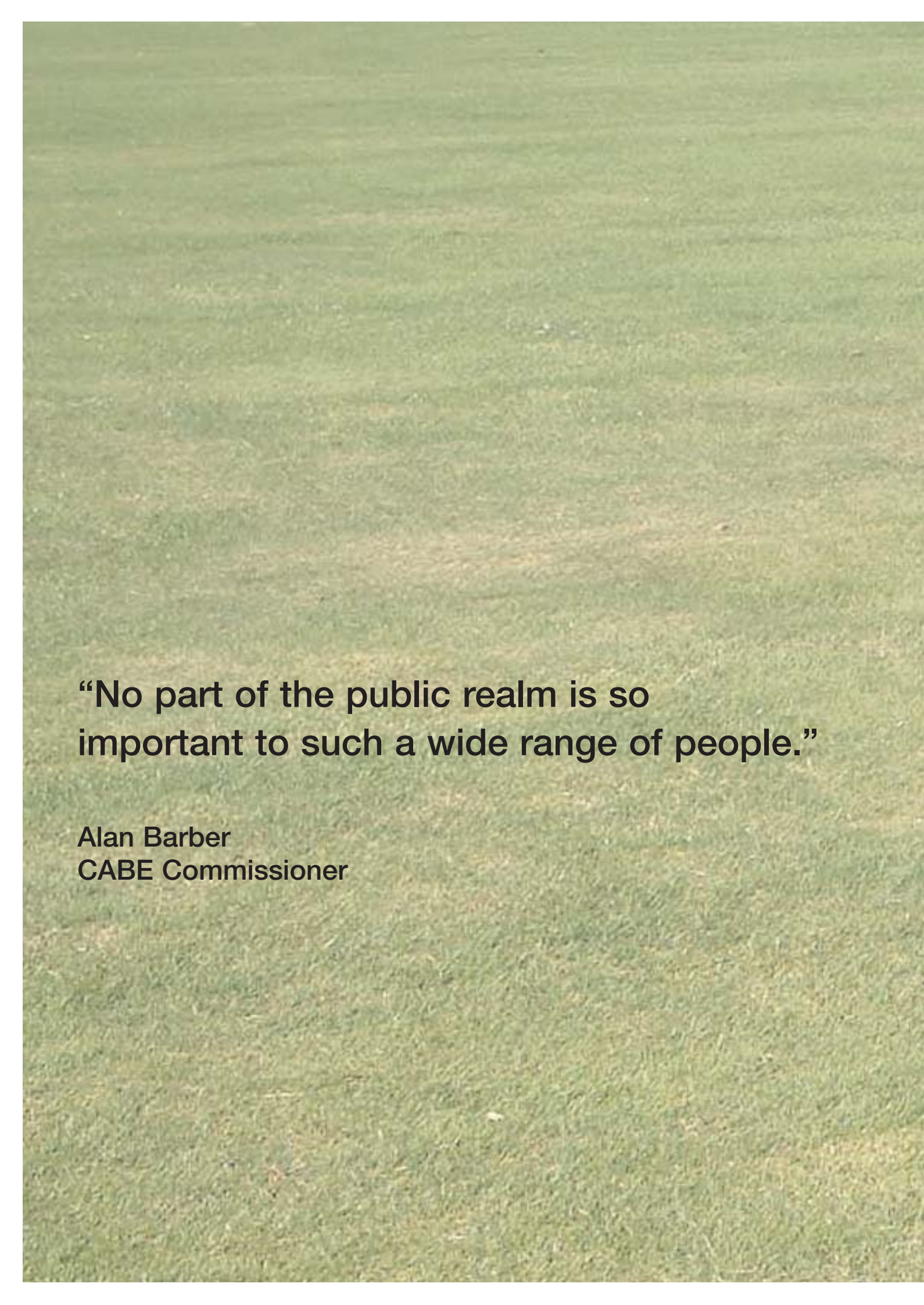




Great Yarmouth
Borough Council

**A PARKS &
OPEN SPACES
STRATEGY
FOR THE
GREAT
YARMOUTH
BOROUGH**

FINAL DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION



“No part of the public realm is so important to such a wide range of people.”

**Alan Barber
CABE Commissioner**

FOREWORD



It is now well understood how much parks and open spaces can contribute to the quality of life felt by people within their own neighbourhoods, and how much the state of the local environment affects their sense of well-being.

Whether it be formal gardens, semi-natural or woodland areas, sports facilities, recreational open space within housing areas, play areas, or as in the case of our Borough simply the beach, these open spaces provide the venue and opportunities for a vast range of activities for all ages.

They also engender community spirit, assist the local economy and aid bio-diversity. In other words they make important contributions to the Social, Economic and Environmental well-being of the Borough.


For the last eighteen months, Great Yarmouth Borough Council has been working with CABI Space, a body funded by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister under their Advisory Scheme to produce this document.

It is hoped it will act as a catalyst for significant improvements to our parks and open spaces through better development, design and management, and will thereby help turn around the public's perception of some of our open spaces as uninviting, unsafe and neglected.

The efforts of the public sector, businesses and the local community in the implementation of this strategy will, I have no doubt, lead to real and tangible benefits for everyone who lives and works in the Borough and those who visit.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Packham". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line under the name.

Richard Packham
Chief Executive Officer
Great Yarmouth Borough Council

A wide, open grassy field with a person and two dogs in the distance. The field is mostly green with some brown patches, suggesting a dry or late autumn season. In the background, a person is walking away from the camera, accompanied by two dogs. The horizon is flat and extends across the top of the image.

“The quality and long term management of public spaces is an increasingly important political priority and critical to the sustainable communities agenda.”

Ken Livingstone
Mayor of London

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AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

According to the Government's Urban Task Force, the general perception of our public environment is that it is run down and unkempt; a fact which contributes to a widespread dissatisfaction with modern urban life.

It is estimated that each year, well over half the UK population - some 33 million people - make more than 2.5 billion visits to urban green spaces alone.

In 2003, the Government, through the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, signalled its commitment to reversing the decline of urban green space of previous decades by setting up and funding CABE Space as part of the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment. Its role is to champion excellence in the design and management of public spaces in our towns and cities, and is supported by the Dept. of Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS).

In late 2003, CABE Space launched its Strategic Enabling Scheme, to provide assistance to Local Authorities in developing a Parks and Open Spaces strategy.

Great Yarmouth Borough Council was one of only thirty local authorities nationwide to be selected for this initial project, and since 2004 has been working with a strategic enabler appointed by CABE Space in the preparation of this strategy. A Strategy Working Group was set up comprising Councillors and Officers to direct the development of the strategy, which makes use of the Councils well developed approach to partnership working.

Throughout 2004 the Borough Council has undertaken various consultation exercises to find out what residents and visitors like, dislike and would like to see in and from our Parks and Open Spaces. In addition an audit has been undertaken of all the significant areas of open space within the urban area.

The CABE Space enabler has provided advice and guidance throughout on methodology and research.

This strategy compliments the aspirations of the Borough-wide 2020 vision, together with both the Borough Councils adopted Cultural Strategy 'The Star of the East' and the Strategy for Playing Pitches and Other Outdoor Sports Facilities.

In addition the Borough Council will during 2005 be developing a Needs based Leisure Strategy for the entire borough together with an updated Children's Play Strategy.

When completed, this collection of strategies will provide a clear and structured way forward for the development and improvement of all the boroughs leisure and recreational services.

the need for a parks & open spaces strategy

A pre-requisite for consideration of most funding initiatives now requires applicants to demonstrate 'joined up thinking' i.e. how their projects link together with local, regional and occasionally national policies, whether those policies be economic, environmental or social.

This strategy will provide a framework for the developing parks and open spaces within a larger framework of the complementary strategies for Cultural Services, Playing Pitches, Needs Based Leisure Provision and Children's Play, all of which feed into the aspirations of the Borough-wide 2020 Vision and the aims and objectives of the Local Strategic Partnership.

It will act as a lever to attract more funds into the creation, development and management of the boroughs parks and open spaces.

National planning policy sets out clear expectations for local authorities to prepare green or open space strategies.





Changes to the Development Plan process introduced under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill include a requirement for the preparation of a Local Development Framework (LDF) and increasing emphasis on implementation. The LDF will comprise a Core Strategy, proposals and area action plans. In Great Yarmouth the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy will have the status of a statutory Local Development Document and will form part of the Local Development Framework.

Good quality parks and open spaces are an essential element of urban neighbourhoods and make a profound contribution to communities, offering a wide range of economic, social and environmental benefits. Ensuring a strategic approach to their planning and management can maximise the value of initial capital investment and long term revenue expenditure.

Benefits include:

- maintaining the visual amenity and enhancing the attractiveness of an area to create a sense of civic pride
- increasing property values, aiding urban regeneration and neighbourhood renewal
- enhancing the economic potential of tourism, leisure and cultural economies
- securing more external funding and focussing capital and revenue expenditure in a cost effective manner
- providing a wide variety of cultural, social and community facilities, including seasonal activities such as fairs festivals and concerts
- protecting historical, cultural and architectural heritage
- offering opportunities for better health by reducing levels of stress, providing a variety of recreational facilities for formal and informal use
- improvements in physical and social inclusion including accessibility, particularly for the young, disabled and older people
- enhancing and protecting levels of biodiversity and ecological habitats.

“Successful, thriving and prosperous communities are characterised by streets, parks and open spaces that are clean, safe and attractive: areas that local people are proud of and want to spend their time in.”

**Deputy Prime Minister
John Prescott**

THE BOROUGH'S NEEDS

Public spaces are open to all: regardless of age, gender or ethnic origin. All open spaces and most facilities are free. Within the urban areas of the Borough, with high levels of unemployment and poor health, the provision and promotion of these facilities is of prime importance.

In national research carried out by CABI, 85% of people surveyed felt that the quality of public space and the built environment has a direct impact on their lives and on the way they feel.

The Borough of Great Yarmouth covers a land area of some 17,000 hectares. Of this, approximately 1,800 hectares could be regarded as urban (i.e. the urban centre of Great Yarmouth & Gorleston together with large villages with some urban characteristics). With a population of just over 90,000 it is the 3rd largest urban area in Norfolk.

GYBC Corporate Services estimated in March 2004 that there are 43,910 households in the Borough [Source: GYBC]. This figure includes holiday homes and second homes.

While the rural area is relatively prosperous, there are significant levels of social deprivation within the urban area, particularly in Great Yarmouth, with high levels of unemployment and poor health as measured by various government based indices. Unemployment levels in the area fluctuate with the seasons, being lowest during the summer months.

The level of unemployment (claimant count) for the Great Yarmouth CDRP area in August 2003 was 3.6% when for the UK as a whole the average was 2.6%. During the winter months the figure for Yarmouth reaches about 16%. About 31%

of employees work part time. The town's urban environment is considered by many to be poor, although significant regeneration investment has been made in recent years.

Great Yarmouth today remains in the top 5 of UK holiday destination, receiving 2.6 million staying visitors and 2.7 million day-trippers per year. As well as the attractions, entertainment and cultural activities on offer, visitors will be influenced by their perception of the environment around them. It is in this context that well managed and maintained parks and open spaces can have a significant impact on the tourist economy.

They can also provide venues for cultural & entertainment activities. Parks, open spaces and recreational provision continues to be a non-statutory local authority responsibility.

Nevertheless, Great Yarmouth Borough Council recognises the vital role such facilities and opportunities play in enhancing the quality of life for local communities and fostering civic pride. It consequently provides a range of active (sport) and passive recreational facilities and opportunities for participation.

a case for a parks and open spaces strategy for great yarmouth

This particular strategy aims to provide a holistic approach to the provision of parks and open spaces i.e. to treat them as a network of spaces, to join up with other quality of life strategies such as those for health, leisure and culture, and to focus on improvements in quality.

Parks and open spaces are as essential to our towns and cities as roads and sewers. They breathe life into communities, bringing charm, beauty character, wildlife and a sense of place. They have a key role to play in ensuring environmental, economic and social sustainability. Decent parks and open spaces not only contribute to a higher quality physical environment, but also assist in area regeneration and contribute to the health and well being of residents

Despite their value, urban parks and open spaces are often neglected. The Public Park Assessment carried out by the Urban parks Forum in 2001 found that less than half of all local authorities in England and Wales had any form of green space strategy. However, those local authorities which did have strategies were





found to have better quality open space, and the Urban Green Spaces Task Force also found that the lack of a strategy was a real barrier to having a high quality public realm.

The strategy will by necessity press for long term commitments with regard to the development and management of public open space. Too often where money is allocated to parks, insufficient attention is paid to their long term care- a good strategy will enable the co-ordination of planning, design, management and maintenance of our parks and open spaces.

The strategy itself is one of a number which seeks to address the development of leisure, recreational and cultural services, and will in turn both support and be supported by those strategies that help to underpin urban renaissance by:

- involving Communities to create a shared vision
- safeguarding the future of our green/open spaces
- improving the quality of neighbourhoods
- enhancing the well being of local people
- attracting resources for management.

The Council of Europe is one of many organisations and individuals who have sought to sum up the value of open spaces in urban areas. They said:

'Open space is an essential part of the urban heritage, a strong element in the architectural and aesthetic form of a city, plays an important educational role, is ecologically significant, is important for social interaction and fostering community

“Companies are attracted to places that offer well designed, well managed public spaces and these in turn attract customers, employees and services. House buyers are willing to pay to be near green space.”

**The Value of Public Space
CABE**

THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The value of public space in all aspects of people's lives - economic, health, youth, crime reduction, community cohesion, biodiversity and movement is firmly established. Development of our parks and open spaces to maximise their contribution to these is the strategic aim.

“Access to good quality, well maintained public spaces can help to improve our physical and mental health by encouraging us to walk more, to play sport, or simply to enjoy a green and natural environment.”

**The Value of Public Space
CABE**

Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation underpins Great Yarmouth's Green Space Strategy. It recommends the audit and assessment of local needs in order to develop local standards based on supply and demand for facilities. The PPG advises local authorities through development plans and strategies to protect outdoor recreation facilities to meet locally identified standards and in so doing identify sites surplus to recreational need. It was strengthened in 2002 to give all public open spaces greater protection from development and urging local authorities to use "planning obligations" (legal agreements often referred to as "section 106) to secure improvements and better management of public open spaces.

Advice on the production of such Audits and Assessments is to be found in the PPG's companion document "Assessing Needs and Opportunities". Published by the Government some weeks after the revised PPG17, the companion guide is a comprehensive and valuable 'handbook' that elaborates upon the task of undertaking local assessments of need and audits of provision for open space and sport and recreation facilities.

Working Together - the guidance emphasises the need for assessments and audits to be undertaken by cross-departmental working within local authorities, thus linking the town planning process with the Community Strategy and the Best Value process. Local planners are advised to work with their colleagues responsible for management of open space, sport and recreation facilities in compiling audits and assessments. External stakeholders, too, are to be an integral part of the framework that delivers local assessments and audits.

assessment process

At the heart of the guide is a five-step process for undertaking a local assessment: -

- Step 1: Identify local needs.
- Step 2: Audit local provision.
- Step 3: Determine provision standards.
- Step 4: Apply the provision standards.
- Step 5: Draft policies.

post assessment

when the audits and assessments are complete, the local planning authorities are then advised that they should set local standards for the provision of open space,

sport and recreation facilities, including quantitative and qualitative elements and an accessibility component. No reference is now made to the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) Six-Acre Standard and the guidance specifically advises against the adoption of national standards. However, in the case of Great Yarmouth the NPFA 6 Acre Standard has been used for a number of years as a baseline in assessing and measuring provision, and whilst it is a national standard remains relevant to the Borough.

sport england

Sport England is the national agency for the development and protection of sporting opportunity and is a statutory planning consultee. In March 2003 it produced "Towards a Level Playing Field: A Guide to the Production of Playing Pitch Strategies", working in conjunction with the Central Council of Physical Recreation, National Playing Fields Association, Local Government Association and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The guide demonstrates how a playing pitch strategy sits under a Green Space Strategy and links with the Community Strategy, Local Plan and Cultural Strategy.





national playing fields association (npfa)

In the past, Great Yarmouth has adopted the Six Acre Standard (2.43 hectares) produced by the National Playing Fields Association. This is a national minimum standard for outdoor recreation, which seeks to achieve the following:

- 1.2 hectares of Sports Pitches per 1000 population
- 0.4-0.6 hectares Other Youth and Adult Space per 1000 population.
- 0.4-0.5 hectares Informal Children's Playspace per 1000 population.
- 0.2-0.3 hectares Equipped Children's Playspace per 1000 population.

Clearly this is a National Standard, which does not necessarily reflect local circumstances. It is based purely on the supply of sites, rather than what is actually needed, taking no account of

population characteristics such as age structure, quality and suitability of the facility or local accessibility. Nevertheless, it is intended that it will remain as the Strategy's benchmark for quantitative assessment, pending future consideration of alternative methods of determining levels of provision.

sustainable communities

"Living Places - Cleaner, Safer, Greener" sets out the governments vision for public space and provides a response to the "Green Spaces, Better Places" report produced by the Urban Greenspaces Taskforce. This Vision is part of the Sustainable Communities Plan through which government is seeking to develop partnerships between local authorities and their communities. One of the key requirements of sustainable communities is to provide "A safe and healthy local environment with well-designed public and green space".

The Parks & Open Spaces Strategy begins to respond to some of the outdoor recreation issues addressed in this national vision and will provide a more comprehensive and corporate response including management and maintenance.

regional context

The Government's regional policy for East Anglia (Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire) is set out in Regional Planning Guidance 6 (RPG6), published in July 1991. The RPG will eventually be replaced by the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the East of England, a statutory document to be issued under the new Planning and Compulsory Purchase legislation. The RSS will guide development in the East of England for at least the next 20 years - housing, economic development, the environment, transport, sport and recreation, waste development, mineral extraction and much more.

Good management and design of parks can help to reduce the risk and fear of crime, allowing everyone to make the most of public spaces.

**The Value of Public Space
CABE**

THE COUNCIL'S VISION

Achieving the 2020 Vision Community Strategy:
“We will, through our environmental strategy, protect and enhance the environment and improve community safety.”

**20/20 Vision Outcome for
the year 2020:**

**“Streets, parks and public
open spaces maintained in
pristine condition.”**

This Green Space Strategy has to conform to Great Yarmouth's corporate vision. Great Yarmouth's overarching vision is set out in the Community Strategy - A Revised path to the Future (2020 Vision). The strategic vision in the Great Yarmouth Community Strategy has been identified by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), a group bringing together representatives from the Borough's communities and its public, private and voluntary organisations. The vision has identified four themes:

- Economy - A prosperous and dynamic economy
- Environment - A safe and sustainable environment
- Social - A healthy and cohesive community
- Learning - To improve and co-ordinate learning activities across the Borough

Delivery of the Green Space Strategy will contribute significantly to the Borough's ambitious vision across all four themes.

great yarmouth boroughwide local plan / local development framework

The Great Yarmouth Borough - wide Local Plan is a statutory plan and policy document, adopted in February 2001, which guides Great Yarmouth's development to 2006. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act received Royal Assent in May 2004 and introduced major changes to the planning system. The new legislation will result in the replacement

of the old system of structure plans, Local Plans and Supplementary Planning Guidance with a new system of Local Development Frameworks (LDF) prepared by Local Planning Authorities (LPA).

Whereas the Great Yarmouth Borough - Wide Local Plan (February 2001) was a single document, the LDF will be a portfolio of separate Local Development Documents (LDDs) comprising statutory Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and non-statutory Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). The LDF will also include the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), the Local Development Scheme (LDS) and the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).

Policies and standards proposed in this Strategy will be taken forward as part of the LDF for the Borough of Great Yarmouth and used as a bridge between the Borough - Wide Local Plan and the LDF, to include green space issues in the planning process. The Green Space Strategy, if possible, will be reported to Cabinet & Executive committees, proposing adoption as 'Supplementary Planning Guidance'.

This is an interim measure until the LDF is adopted. After the LDF has been adopted the Council will re-adopt the Parks & Open Spaces Strategy as a 'Supplementary Planning Document', including any additional consultation and appraisal required through the Statement of Community Involvement.

In producing its Statement of Community Involvement the Council wishes to promote effective public participation in the planning system. This will ensure that all sectors of the community (local

residents, businesses, landowners, groups, organisations) and stakeholders (national and regional organisations) have an opportunity to be actively involved at an early stage of the planning process. This involvement will continue through the preparation and revision of local development documents, supplementary planning documents and in significant development control decisions.

Planning policies are essential in protecting parks and open spaces and in the process of securing best value from the development control process. They set out the standards and quality expected of developers and they spell out what forms of development will be permitted, where and why. Every built development will accommodate people, whether they are visiting, receiving a service, working, studying, or living in the building and each person will have open space needs. Developers can and should be helping us to improve our green and public spaces. Most are happy to do so because quality spaces enhance the Borough's vitality and the value of the development. A look at estate agents' publicity will show how much a location with parks and open spaces and trees can help property values and encourage investment.

supplementary planning guidance

Supplementary Planning Guidance on Biodiversity in Norfolk was adopted by the Borough Council on 21 July 2004. The guidance seeks to emphasise the importance of adopting a positive approach to biodiversity protection and enhancement, and sets out the key considerations relating to wildlife and



biodiversity that should be taken into account in all development proposals. The number of the actions identified in the guidance are relevant to the management of green species, particularly the natural and semi-natural areas such as woodlands and Local Nature Reserves.

planning agreements

Planning Agreements (or Section 106 Agreements) require developers to contribute towards greenspace provision. It is an intention of PPG17 that developers' contributions should increasingly be used to enhance the quality of existing greenspace that would be used by residents of the proposed development. In the past, when provision has been made within a new development, it has sometimes been of the wrong type, poorly located or too small to be useful. The Strategy proposes that when a new development is planned, the Green Space Assessment Procedure is used to determine how the residents will best be

served. This may be by a new site within the development, or by enhancing an existing site that is nearby. Furthermore it is proposed that the Strategy will inform the future Supplementary Planning Document for Planning Obligations (Section 106 Agreements) incorporating provision standards for seeking contributions for greenspaces from commercial and industrial developers. The Supplementary Planning Document will need to make clear to developers a transparent methodology for assessing contributions. It will also be concise for the benefit of Development Control officers who must make decisions within tight deadlines.

adoption & commuted sums

New development or redevelopment often includes new or remodelled parks and open spaces. Often, though not always, the developer gives these public areas to the Borough Council who then "adopt" and maintain them for the public good.

Each new green space adds to the workload and will increase the total maintenance cost. This is recognised and at handover, the developer will usually provide a "commuted sum" calculated on the costs of maintaining the new scheme for a period of years lasting through its establishment phase. After that period of time has elapsed the Council has to fund the maintenance from its own revenue.

Like many other local authorities Great Yarmouth Borough Council is finding its overall maintenance budget does not stretch to cover all its responsibilities. One area that we can look at is the commuted sum arrangement. We will be examining the costs and implications of this. When the Strategy is adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance/Supplementary Planning Document the arrangements of the commuted sum will be a binding requirement in new development.

Policies and standards proposed in this Green Space Strategy will be taken forward, to include green space issues in the planning process.

LINKS WITH OTHER STRATEGIES

The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy is one of a range of strategies designed to improve the quality of the Borough's public open space environments and provide clean, safe and attractive facilities, open to all.

The local context shows the strong links between the Green Space Strategy and the aims and objectives of other strategies being pursued by the Council and the Local Strategic Partnership. The Parks & Open Spaces Strategy is relevant to number of other Council policies and plans. The following chart illustrates the relationship between those plans and policies.

Cultural Strategy: Adopted 2004

Playing Pitches and Outdoor Sporting Facilities: Adopted November 2003

Parks and Open Spaces Strategy: First draft due for completion March, Timescale for adoption Oct. 2005

Children's Play Strategy: 1999-2004 Strategy now being updated: Consultation started, Timescale for adoption Dec. 2005

Needs Based Leisure Strategy: Work shortly to commence, Timescale for adoption January 2006

links to the cultural heritage of the borough

Great Yarmouth has a proud heritage, the potential of which is now being tapped through sources of significant funding including the UK's largest Townscape Heritage Initiative scheme. Major projects such as the recently opened £4m Time and Tide Museum which showcases our Maritime Heritage, together with progress on the repair and interpretation strategy for the medieval Town Wall, illustrate progress the development of the Borough as a cultural destination. The development of some of our Parks and Open Spaces both as part of that heritage, and as a means of linking and enhancing it, will be a key element of this strategy. Great Yarmouth's unique geography, which basically represents a long thin promontory of land between the sea and the River Yare, with dense development

National, regional and local strategies, and policy statements that impact on delivery of parks and open space services are in many areas of public service. Our plans will need to take account of these, and show how they will support and contribute to their aims.

within its walls, (such as the Rows), placed early pressure on the availability of Open Space, although evidence exists of some balance being achieved in parts of the town.

As the town extended further beyond the medieval walls that pressure continued with residential, commercial and transport demands. When allied to the devastation caused by bombing in World War 2, the Norfolk Gardens Trust's 1997 Landscape History Research/ Town Gardens Survey document for Great Yarmouth states that the result has been one of the highest percentage losses of designed open space within the County. Fifteen of the twenty seven sites considered within their survey were either destroyed or significantly reduced by one or more of the above factors between 1887 and 1987.

management

Between 1990 and 2004 the Boroughs Parks and Open Spaces were managed and maintained under contracts, which were a result of Government legislation at that time which required such works to be put out to competitive tender. Whilst it is true to say that in the early days this resulted in financial savings, it ultimately led to a general decline in standards throughout the country, including Great Yarmouth.

This was due to a number of factors:

- Loss of experience & expertise within the industry through early retirement as councils slimmed down to better compete with the private sector;

- A major reduction in the level of training for new recruits;
- A change of emphasis within Councils from being Parks and Landscape managers responsible for developing and improving the service and assets to Contract managers responsible for simply monitoring and managing Contractor performance;
- Financial pressures caused by competitive tenders with low margins and annual increases restricted to index linked inflation which did not reflect the industry's true growth in costs, leading to conflict between the requirements of service delivery and the contractors business plan.

Since 2004 the Borough has introduced a new way of maintaining and managing its Parks and Open Spaces by entering into a working partnership with Norfolk County Council. The County Council's operational arm delivers services on the ground as commissioned by the Borough Council, whilst the Borough Council have set up an Environmental Strategy section to address the future development of parks and Open Spaces, including their management and maintenance. The results arising out of the research and consultation undertaken during the preparation of this strategy will form a fundamental basis for that work.

Whilst there have over the years been many projects involving the community, they have for the most part been specific and time limited. Examples include:



in bloom initiative

A committee made up of the council, local commerce and the local community to promote the Borough through success in the regional and national In Bloom competitions, and encourage the improvement of the local environment through the promotion and administration of the Boroughs own In Bloom competitions. The Borough won the Coastal Towns regional Anglia in Bloom competition in 2003 and 2004, and gained bronze and silver awards in the national Britain in Bloom competition over the same period with another silver award in 2005. Local Villages Filby and Winterton have also had significant success, with Filby having won the gold award in the national competition

community gardens

Community Gardens Initiative: A one year scheme where the Borough Council offered grants to Parish Councils and local groups to undertake environmental improvement works to areas of land which would not otherwise have had money spent on them. Four villages took up the challenge.

One aspect of management which will be explored is the potential for the community to get more involved in the local management and running of 'their' open spaces.

trees for life initiative

Trees for Life: A scheme run for a number of years whereby the Council plants a tree to commemorate the birth of each child resident in the borough during that particular year. This normally takes place during national tree week at the end of November and is attended by the children and their parents.

“The purpose of good parks planning is to place all parts in a harmonious relationship”

**A Guide to Producing Park and Green Space Management Plans
CABE SPACE**

ASSESSING OUR OPEN SPACES

It has been estimated that some 7% of urban park users in England go there for sporting activities, representing about 7.5 million visitors a year.

In broad terms, open spaces within an urban area fall into two categories:

Civic Space: any open space that is predominantly hard paved to serve a civic function such as squares and plazas, market places, pedestrian streets and promenades;

Greenspace: any vegetated land or structure, water or geological feature.

In relation to the Borough of Great Yarmouth the beach and coastline is included within the broad Greenspace definition.

The Boroughs Parks and Open Spaces are a vital ingredient in enhancing both the quality of life of residents, and the attractiveness of the Borough to visitors. They also provide a diverse range of habitats for wildlife.

Our Open Spaces come in many forms and include not only Parks, Gardens and Recreation Grounds, but also our Cemeteries and Churchyards, Beaches, and any area accessible to the public where events could be held, such as the Market Place and South Quay. It also includes linear open spaces, such as parts of the riverside and Town Wall.



Audits of the borough's parks and opens spaces will inform future management plans, defining main issues and concerns. This will be set against statistical evidence, operational constraints and the wider policy context in which services are delivered and managed.

They also provide a diverse range of uses:

Our Recreation Grounds, Seafront Bowls Greens and Children's Play Areas provide opportunities for participation in sporting activities and promotion of healthy lifestyles for all age groups;

Biodiversity and the Natural Environment is enhanced through the management regimes for Kitchener Road Cemetery and Herbert Barnes Park, both havens for bird watchers;

Public and Community Events such as Pop Beach and the annual Maritime Festival make use of the Boroughs Open Spaces, along with smaller functions such as fetes and Community based activities;

The Floral Displays of our Parks and Seafront gardens provide attractive places for people to sit and relax, and encourage tourism.

The high quality landscaping associated with the South Gorleston Development Area not only enhances the environment for the new housing developments, but also businesses who will be encouraged to relocate there;

The Magdalen Cemetery and Crematorium Garden of Remembrance is one of the Borough Councils most highly maintained sites and provides a beautiful place of tranquillity for people to quietly reflect and remember;

Green corridors, linking different areas of the town with each other and the surrounding countryside and used for walking, cycling etc.

site audits

A comprehensive audit of all the major areas of open space within the urban area of the borough has been undertaken using a methodology previously applied to the London Parks. The audit covered the following areas which are listed below in order of how they scored, using an average of the weighted scores of individual elements of the area concerned, (highest score first) :

1. Maintenance
2. Cultural Heritage
3. Landscape Quality
4. Quality of General Facilities
5. Access & Circulation
6. Security & Safety
7. Response to People
8. Management
9. Health & Education
10. Natural Heritage





This highlights the current areas of strength and those which will require development within the Strategy

The Boroughs topography is such that the landscape is predominantly flat and this is reflected in almost all of the Parks and Open Spaces. The formal parks and gardens were for the most part constructed during the late 1800's/ early 1900's. Development and provision of Open Space during the latter part of the 20th century has largely been linked to urban development over the same period.

Due to both local climate and geology, the urban area of the Borough, particularly near the coast, is relatively limited in the amount and variety of planting that succeeds and thrives. The soil is particularly light and sandy, and the coastline is subject to biting cold easterly winds. Trees in the urban area are particularly scarce, with Evergreen Oak, Sycamore and Pines being the most common varieties. Rural areas of the Borough, particularly in the north and west are more populous in terms of tree

numbers and variety although the agricultural nature of the area still reflects a relatively low tree population in comparison with other parts of the country.

However, it is those flat elements of the landscape that are themselves the attraction for so many people. The Borough encompasses part of the Norfolk Broads, Breydon Water on the outskirts of the town is a nationally important natural landscape and bird haven, and the beaches are an attraction of vital importance to the local tourist industry.

The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy will seek to further develop a diverse range of landscapes throughout the urban areas of the borough. Whilst an overall range of differing types of open space are provided within the Borough, many of these are based on a 'single use' design e.g. sport, which can limit opportunity for people to access, experience and enjoy the other benefits that open spaces can provide.

A comprehensive audit of all the major areas of open space within the urban area of the borough has been undertaken using a methodology previously applied to the London Parks. The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy will seek to further develop a diverse range of landscapes throughout the urban areas of the borough.

CONSULTING STAKEHOLDER COMMUNITIES

A strategy which aims to improve the quality of parks and open spaces in the borough must reflect the desires and ambitions of the most important group of stakeholders; Communities themselves.

“No part of the public realm is so important to such a wide range of people. The park that provides a toddler’s first taste of freedom should also be a welcoming place for the elderly to socialise.”

Alan Barber
CABE Commissioner

Analysis of latest statistics shows the age range across the Borough to be relatively evenly spread:

| | |
|----------|--------|
| Under 20 | 23.65% |
| 20-39 | 23.86% |
| 40-59 | 27.04% |
| Over 60 | 25.45% |

With only one or two variations this pattern is also generally reflected when analysed at Ward level. Great Yarmouth Primary Care Trust's 'Health Atlas' prepared for the Great Yarmouth Local Strategic Partnership in 2004 highlighted the following issues:

life expectancy

Long term trends show inequality in life expectancy between Great Yarmouth and the rest of England continuing to widen (although more recent data shows a promising upturn). Great Yarmouth has one of the shortest male and female life expectancies in the East of England and both are shorter than for England as a whole.

population

Great Yarmouth's population is older than that of England and the east of England region, although its mean age is very similar to the rest of Norfolk.

One in Seven people live alone. In contrast to the rest of England, Great Yarmouth has an overwhelming majority of "white" people.

health

One in Five people report that a long term illness is limiting their lifestyle. One in Ten people report that their health is "not good." This is considerably higher than England, the East of England and Norfolk

Highest levels for both categories are reported from areas with the highest long term unemployment, all of which are urban wards.

employment

More than One in Twenty people in Great Yarmouth are unemployed. All areas of Great Yarmouth have a higher unemployment level than the East of England, and all but one ward has higher levels than the rest of Norfolk.

income & benefits

All the urban wards have a higher Income Support claims rate than the average for England.

All wards have a higher Disability claims rate than the average for the East of England.

child care

In One in Four households with dependant children, the children are cared for by a lone parent. There are One in Five households with dependent children where the adult carers are unemployed.

elderly care

About One in Five people in Great Yarmouth are over the age of 65 years. About One in Ten people in Great Yarmouth are over the age of 75 years, higher than the figures for England and the East of England but similar to the rest of Norfolk. One in Six households are single pensioner occupied- Higher than Norfolk, East of England and England.

education

Great Yarmouth has a high proportion of adults with no qualifications. Nelson ward has nearly twice as many unqualified adults as England





consultation

A comprehensive consultation exercise was undertaken throughout 2004 which included the local press, Citizens Panel questionnaire and face to face interviews with members of the public. Three questions were asked, with the four most popular responses being:

a. what do you particularly like about the borough's parks & open spaces?

1. Landscape/ Open Space/Plants & Trees
2. Clean/ Well kept/ Attractive
3. Accessible
4. Childrens' playgrounds/ Family orientated

b. what don't you like about the borough's parks & open spaces?

1. Anti-Social Behaviour/ Vandalism/ Graffiti/ Flytipping
2. Litter
3. Drunks/ Drug addicts/ Syringes
4. Dog fouling/ Dogs not under control

c. what would you like to see in the the borough's parks & open spaces?

1. More Rangers/ Wardens/ Police/ Byelaws
2. More Bins (inc Cigarette bins, Needle bins)
3. More Children's Play facilities/ Youth facilities/ Teenage play

The results of the consultation highlighted particularly the social issues around use of Parks and Open Spaces. Use of recent changes in the law and procedures relating to anti- social behaviour and littering will be incorporated into management plans for Parks and Open Spaces. The desire for additional play provision is also acknowledged and will be fed into the updated Strategy for Children's Play which is currently in the course of preparation.



“Public spaces are open to all, regardless of ethnic origin, age or gender, and as such they represent a democratic forum for citizens and society. When properly designed and cared for, they bring communities together, provide meeting places and foster social ties of a kind that have been disappearing in many urban areas. These spaces shape the cultural identity of an area, are part of its unique character and provide a sense of place for local communities.”

**The Value of Public Space
CABE SPACE**

CURRENT OPEN SPACE PROVISION

“A study from the University of East Anglia in 2003 indicates that being close to green space increased home prices from 1 - 30%, depending on proximity, type of park and visibility.

Provision is measured using the National Playing Field Association "6 Acre Standard" which identifies a requirement of 6 acres (2.4ha) of Open Space per 1000 population. This is divided into 'formal open space' (pitches)-1.6ha, and 'informal' (parks/ childrens play space)- 0.8ha.

Analysis of the figures as at February 2005 shows that Boroughwide the total open space requirement is 218.16ha against an actual provision of 204.46ha, a shortfall of 13.70ha.

However application of the split shows that whilst there is a significant shortfall in formal (pitch) provision (97.14ha against a requirement of 145.44ha) the combination of informal (parks) and children's play space (100.42ha and 6.90ha respectively) exceeds the 72.72ha requirement by 34.60ha.

Localised information is still currently based on the old Ward/Parish boundaries

Of a total of 31:
12 had a shortfall of both formal and informal open space.
10 had a shortfall of formal open space.
6 had a shortfall of informal open space.
3 had a surplus of both formal and informal open space.
The Boroughs main areas of Open Space are listed opposite, identified by the category that best describes their main usage. Some areas will also provide other categories of usage to the main one and these are identified by the following letters in brackets:

Allotments are not included within the definition of Open Space provision. In the case of Great Yarmouth, ownership and

The Great Yarmouth Borough has 204.46 hectares of parks and public open spaces. Not all of this is in pristine condition. Additionally, there is a significant shortfall in provision of parks and open spaces. This strategy aims to address both of these issues.

responsibility for allotments within the borough lies with the Allotment Association. There may be scope however to review allotment provision within the Borough in the context of providing alternative (i.e. open space) facilities where appropriate and where agreement can be reached.

vision

The vision for the future of the Boroughs Parks and Open Spaces is based on that of GreenSpace (formerly the Urban Parks Forum) and has been endorsed by the Boroughwide Environmental Forum:

A network of easily accessible, safe, attractive and welcoming parks and open spaces which meet the needs of everyone and which contribute to the economic, social, environmental and educational well being of people and places now and for future generations.

setting standards

quantity

The Strategy will for the time being adopt the NPFA 6 Acre Standard as the benchmark for the provision of public open space within the urban areas of the Borough, and will use it to address the joint issues of shortfall and balance of provision.

NB: Within the context of bio-diversity and the natural landscape, English Nature's document 'A Space For Nature' recommends the following:

- An accessible natural greenspace less than 300m (in a straight line) from home
- Statutory Local Nature Reserves provided at a minimum level of one hectare per 1000 population
- At least one accessible 20 hectare site within 2km of home; one accessible 100 hectare site within 5km of home; and one accessible 500 hectare site within 10km of home.

The Strategy will recognise that with sites such as Breydon Water and North Denes, the recommendations for larger areas are met, however improved access issues will be considered.

quality

There is no consensus about what is actually meant by 'quality'. In the context of this Strategy, the definition of a quality standard is that used by CABE Space in their briefing paper on Setting Local Standards i.e. the setting out of the characteristics of parks and open spaces that we would like to see, and an aspiration for existing spaces and a requirement for new ones.

The proposed quality standard for Great Yarmouth's Parks and Open Spaces is:

a. general characteristics

- Part of a network of green and open



CEMETERIES
Great Yarmouth (Kitchener Road)
Cemetery N G
Magdalen Cemetery and Crematorium F
Gorleston Cemetery
Caister Cemetery

RECREATION GROUNDS
Beaconsfield Recreation Ground ©
Wellesley Recreation Ground
Cobholm Recreation Ground
Gorleston Recreation Ground ©
Magdalen Recreation Ground ©
Mill Lane Recreation Ground U ©
Southtown Common©
St Nicholas Recreation Ground U ©
Bure Park N ©
North Drive/Britannia Bowls (Yarmouth Seafront)

FORMAL PARKS
St Georges Park ©
Priory Gardens ©
Anchor Gardens
Clock Gardens
Gorleston Cliffs R ©*
Harbour Gardens
Waterways Gardens
Gorleston Pool Garden

Urban Green Space
Victoria Road G
Crow Hall Green
Bunnewell Avenue ©
Meadow Park
Diana Way ©
Blake Drive ©*
Middleton Gardens
Cobholm ©

NATURAL OPEN SPACE
Herbert Barnes Park
Breydon Water (Broads Authority)
Yarmouth Beach (North)

URBAN OPEN SPACE
Market Place
South Quay
Feathers Plain

GREEN LINKS
The Passageways (Gorleston)
Caister Road
Trafalgar Road
River Bure
River Yare

HERITAGE OPEN SPACE
Town Wall Open Space G
Nelsons Monument
Admiral Duncans Pump
Caister Roman Fort (English Heritage)
Burgh Castle Roman Fort (English Heritage)

BEACHES
Yarmouth Beach (Central and South)
Gorleston Beach

The Borough Council currently has 78 sites which provide Children's Play facilities (including youth facilities).

© - Located within main areas of Public Open Space
* - Due for installation within

spaces providing traffic segregated routes through urban areas which link to public transport, walking and cycling routes

- Designed to create a sense of place and provide a setting for the adjoining built or natural environment
- 'Cared for' general appearance
- Safe environment using landscape design and appropriate security measures together with adequate public information signage to create a location where people feel at ease

b. accessibility

- Traversed by hard surface paths, where appropriate, which are suitable for wheelchairs, with enough width for two wheelchairs to pass, and broadly following desire lines (but avoiding straight lines wherever possible)

c. planting & biodiversity

- Good balance of mown grassed areas, in varying sizes, with adequate provision for active and passive recreation, both formal and informal.

- A mix of indigenous and ornamental species of varying ages.
- Range of habitat types
- Buffer or shelter planting as necessary

d. facilities & features

- Provision for children, teenagers and families, although such provision should not be central to provision.
- Adequate street furniture- bins, signage, seats
- Lighting where appropriate
- Passive surveillance from nearby properties, together with active surveillance where appropriate
- Adequate safety measures adjacent to potentially dangerous areas (e.g. water features, steep drops)

e. management & maintenance

- Litter clearly under control

- Limited evidence of vandalism or graffiti, and rapid and effective control
- Little or no evidence of dog fouling

- Grassed areas regularly and neatly cut in accordance with their specific requirements
- Flower beds, Shrub beds and other horticultural areas/ features have little or no weed presence and are ideally mulched
- All paths and hard surfaces kept clean from silt, debris and detritus
- All facilities in a clean, safe and usable condition
- Path and other lighting adequately maintained and working

CABE Space is currently developing an evaluation tool for measuring the quality of Open Spaces based on Green Flag.

It is hoped to further develop this for benchmarking with other authorities in the region through the East Anglian Open Spaces Forum.

The Vision:

“A network of easily accessible, safe, attractive and welcoming parks and open spaces which meet the needs of everyone and which contribute to the economic, social, environmental and educational well being of people and places now and for future generations.”

ACTION PLAN & SPECIFIC PROPOSALS

A strategy is of little use if it results in little or no discernible positive change. The Council will therefore identify actions, timescales and delivery agents and performance indicators to deliver the aims and objectives of this strategy.

“We are the fourth wealthiest nation in the world, and yet we have chosen for a long time to dress ourselves in rags. As a society we seem now to accept the poverty of our streets and open spaces.”

**Sir Stuart Lipton,
Chairman, CABE
‘The Value of Public Space’, 2004**

protection of green space

Sites will be identified for protection within the LDF based on their Greenspace value and quality. This will be assessed using the Greenspace Assessment Procedure.

greenspace deprivation

Areas of greenspace deprivation will be identified. Sites within these areas will be allocated in the LDF as a priority for Green Space provision.

continuing consultation

The consultation process initiated in the Parks & Open Spaces Strategy will be continued by regular community consultation in line with the Statement of Community Involvement and the principles of the Community Strategy (2020 Vision) when adopting the to Greenspace Strategy as a Supplementary Planning Document.

monitoring

In addition to the monitoring procedures set out in this document, the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy will be monitored on an annual basis in line with the Annual Monitoring Report and reviewed every three years once adopted as Supplementary Planning Document.

stronger communities

Proposal: To work with our partners in the Local Strategic Partnership in the development of the Boroughs Parks and Open Spaces to ensure their contribution to the Economic, Environmental, Social and Learning Objectives is maximised

Proposal: To develop partnering arrangements with Community groups and organisations in the management and maintenance of Parks & Open Spaces. Included in this will be the development of a clear framework which will set standards, define limits of responsibility, deal with legal and public liability issues and ensure long term sustainability, covering a range of partnership options from simple volunteer activity to wholly community managed facilities.

Target: To introduce initial partnering arrangements within 12 months

putting people first

Proposal: To increase the local community's access to information about their Parks and Open Spaces prior to inviting comment on proposals for change.

Target: To develop an information leaflet relating to public open spaces within 12 months

Proposal: To develop effective methods for achieving meaningful consultation with individuals, communities and stakeholders by building their knowledge, experience and confidence, ensuring that such consultation effectively influences all levels of the development process, from strategic to individual management plans.

economic

Proposal: To work with our colleagues in Regeneration Services to integrate the development and management of open space with the aims and objectives of the Cultural and Tourism Strategies, including implementation of the

InteGreat scheme, regenerating the seafront, town centre & heritage areas.

Target: To identify and implement a scheme to improve the green link between The Seafront and Town Centre (Trafalgar Road) within 12 months

Proposal: To work with the County Council and Highways Agency to improve the quality of the key approaches and 'gateways' to the Borough and the urban area.

Target: To secure improvements to the A12 Western bypass soft landscaping within 12 months

environmental

Proposal: To work with Environmental groups to further develop management plans for improving bio-diversity and the enhancement of the natural landscape throughout the Borough, together with improved interpretation and promotion as an educational resource.

Proposal: To develop and produce development and management plans for all the Boroughs parks and open spaces.
Target: Management plans for Herbert Barnes Park, Bure Park and Kitchener Road Cemetery to be reviewed and updated within 12 months

Target: Improved interpretation and information to be improved and firm educational links to be developed and established within two years

social

Proposal: To improve facilities by better promoting the availability, improving accessibility, and encouraging the use of, the Borough's sports facilities, parks and



open spaces as a means of improving the health and welfare of all residents.

Target: To review marketing and promotional activities relating to these facilities. To work with the local sports bodies to improve and target such activities within 2 years.

Proposal: To seek to maximise the use of the Boroughs Parks and Open Spaces and the facilities therein, together with improved wardening, policing and supervision to reduce opportunities for anti-social behaviour.

Target: To review all open spaces with regard to improvements which address Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act within 2 years. To incorporate improvements into individual management plans for delivery (subject to resources) within three years

Proposal: To work with the Health Authority and other agencies in developing parks and open spaces to improve the health of communities

Proposal: To improve access to parks and open spaces by identifying key routes and how safety, amenity and management of these routes can be achieved.

learning

Proposal: To improve interpretation and information about parks and open spaces and what they provide.

Proposal: To seek to provide work experience, training and rehabilitation opportunities through community projects.

To introduce a scheme in partnership with other service providers within 1 year.

resources

Proposal: To introduce a GIS database of all existing green space and open space.

Target: To map the Borough within 2 years.

Proposal: To review the current provision of open space to ensure that what we have is in balance with what is needed and is capable of being sustained, in accordance with PPG17 (Assessment of Need) . To focus on opportunities to create and improve parks and open spaces in areas of deficiency.

Proposal: To work with our operational partner to establish an appropriate core budget for the maintenance of our parks and open spaces and to develop systems for identifying the cost/benefit relationship between development and maintenance.

Proposal: To identify and secure existing and potential funding opportunities.

Proposal: To extend the range of facilities and variety of experience in parks and open spaces throughout the Borough.

“Good quality public spaces can help provide children with opportunities for fun, exercise and learning.”

**The Value of Public Space
CABE SPACE**

Environmental Rangers
c/o The Environment & Health Helpline
Tel: (01493) 856100
Fax: (10493) 846415

Magdalen Neighbourhood Wardens
c/o Magdalen Estate Office
Tel: (01493) 443004

Town Centre Wardens
c/o Town Centre Partnership
Tel: (01493) 745828

Playground Safety
Environmental Rangers
Tel: (01493) 856100
Fax: (10493) 846415

Norfolk County Council Highways
Tel: (01493) 378222

Weekly Refuse Collection
(missed sacks)
Tel: (01493) 846846

Street Sweeping / Litter
Tel: (01493) 846846

Bulky Item Collection
Tel: (01493) 846846

Abandoned Vehicles
Tel: (01493) 846846

Crime and Disorder
Reduction Partnership
Tel: (01493) 856100

Anti Social Behaviour
Helpline
(0845) 605 2222

Dog Fouling
Tel: (01493) 856100

Broken Street Lights
Tel: (0844) 8 008008

Tree Preservation Orders
Tel: (01493) 846422

Listed Buildings
Tel: (01493) 846421

Stray Dogs
Tel: (01493) 846478

Dangerous Structures
Tel: (01493) 846494

Great Yarmouth Public Emergencies
(Out of Hours)
Tel: (01493) 330369

Norfolk Police
Tel: (01953) 424242

Anglia CrimeStoppers
Tel: 0800 555 111

Environment Agency
Tel: (01473) 727712

Voluntary Sector Partnership
Tel: (01493) 845995
Fax: (01493) 844102

Cobholm Community Rangers
Tel: (01493) 418249

Norfolk Constabulary
Safer Community Team
(01493) 333050

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working in partnership with

cabe
space