

Thurston Parish Open Space and Play Strategy 2020

(Final Version August 2021)

Ecology | Green Space | Community | GIS
Studio 12a | Greenway Farm | Wick | BS30 5RL
info@ethosep.co.uk | 0333 0112854

www.ethosep.co.uk



Thurston Parish Open Space and Play Strategy (2020)

Contents

1.0	Introduction	3 - 4
2.0	Methodology	5 - 8
3.0	Strategic Context	9 - 17
4.0	Local Needs Assessment	18 - 19
5.0	Audit of existing open space assets	20 - 25
6.0	Applying local standards	26 - 39
7.0	Future needs for open space	40 - 67
8.0	Recommendations	68 -70

Appendix 1 Quality audit results (March 2020)

Glossary of Terms

Term	Meaning
AGS	Amenity Green Space
ANGSt	Accessible Natural Green Space Standard
ANGS	Accessible Natural Green Space
BAME	Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
FIT	Fields In Trust (originally known as the 'National Playing Fields Association')
GI	Green Infrastructure
GIS	Geographic Information System
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
MUGA	Multi Use Games Area
NEWP	Natural Environment White Paper
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PIPP	Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan
PPG17	Planning Policy Guidance Note 17
PROW	Public Rights of Way
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This Open Space and Play Strategy has been undertaken by Ethos Environmental Planning (Ethos) to inform Thurston Parish Councils' decision-making processes in relation to open space provision. It builds on the open space study undertaken by Ethos for Babergh District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council during 2017-2018 (and updated in May 2019).

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (paragraph 96) recognises that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.

Thurston is a key service village for Mid Suffolk with significant growth planned over the next 15 years or so. Currently Thurston has around 1500 dwellings which is expected to rise by 1468 (as identified in the new joint Babergh and Mid Suffolk Local Plan). This will considerably increase the size of the population in Thurston and with increased pre-school provision, a new primary school with capacity for 420 places and a senior school, there is an expectation that population growth will be across all age ranges. This increased population will place pressure on existing open spaces and will require additional open space provision in order to meet the needs of the population.

1.2 Purpose of this Report

The Strategy aims to provide a robust and up-to-date evidence base and strategy of the needs for open space and play facilities. It identifies specific needs (from the Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan) and quantitative and qualitative deficits or surpluses in the parish, using the open space mapping and standards set within the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment (2016-2036). It also assesses the impacts from new/planned development on existing open space supply, and the resulting open space requirements.

The strategy will provide evidence and recommendations around the following key areas:

- Existing open space provision to be protected;
- Existing open space provision to be enhanced;
- Opportunities for re-location/re-designation of open space;
- Identification of areas for new open space provision; and
- Provide information to support the identification of projects for which Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts can be targeted.

1.3 Structure of the report

The Strategy follows the key stages as summarised below:

- Step 1 – Audit of Existing Open Spaces
- Step 2 – Application of Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Standards (for quantity, accessibility, and quality).
- Step 3 - Assess the impacts from new/planned development on existing open space supply, and the open space requirements from new/planned development against the standards.
- Step 4 – Recommendations (open space to be protected, enhanced, areas for new provision, opportunities for re-location/designation).

1.4 The Study Area

The parish of Thurston (see Figure 1 below) is situated 4 miles east of Bury St. Edmunds in Suffolk and has a population of 3,325 (ONS 2017 mid-year population estimate). The village is well located to neighbouring towns with it being located under 2 miles from the A14 and under 40 miles from the M11 motorway.

The village itself has a range of amenities including children’s education facilities (nursery, pre-school, children’s centre, primary school and upper school) along with community facilities including the New Green Community Centre, Cavendish Hall, a Community library and several open spaces and sports facilities. The village also has two churches: St Peter and the Forge Community Church.

Figure 1 Thurston Parish

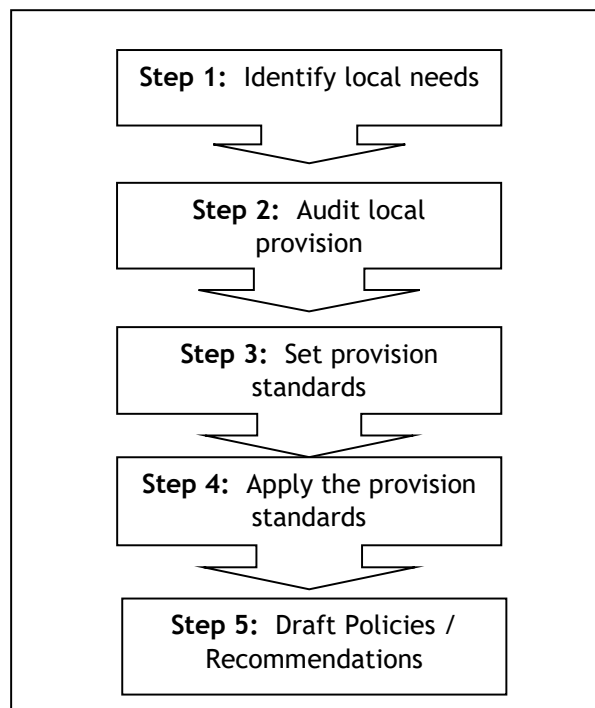


2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 General

The Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Study (2016-2036) was carried out in accordance with the guidance in Section 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17)¹.

The Companion Guide to PPG17 ‘*Assessing Needs and Opportunities*’ recommended an overall approach to this kind of study as summarised below. This provides a tried and tested methodology and takes a consistent approach with many other local authorities.



Although this Strategy follows the above steps, it does not cover ‘Set provision standards’, as it adopts the quantity, accessibility and quality standards already set within the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment (2016-2036).

2.2 Identify Local Needs

Local needs have been identified in the Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan (PIIP), which has been prepared using data collected in the consultation rounds of the Neighbourhood Plan work (based on community engagement).

¹ Although the NPPF supersedes PPG17 and gives clear recommendations for the protection of and appropriate provision for open space, it does not provide any detailed guidance on how to conduct an open space assessment. It is therefore both logical and acceptable to reference the guidance for assessment provided in the former PPG17 and its Companion Guide.

The needs and aspirations identified within the Thurston PIIP in relation to open space provision have been summarised and considered within this Strategy.

2.3 Audit of Existing Open Space Assets

2.3.1 Defining the scope of the audit

In order to build up an accurate picture of the current open space and play provision in the Parish a desktop audit of the open space asset was carried out, which included:

- Open space mapped as part of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment;
- Open space within the parish Neighbourhood Plan;
- Desktop assessment using aerial photography analysis;
- Consideration of new developments that are currently being built out;
- Liaison with the clerk to Thurston Parish Council; and
- Site visits.

Quality audits were undertaken as part of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment during 2016 at 519 open spaces. These were updated in 2020 as part of this Strategy to ensure they are still relevant and up-to-date.

The quality audits were undertaken using the same criteria set out in Section 7.5.2 of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment 2016-2036. The audits were undertaken using a standardised methodology and consistent approach (explained in more detail in Section 6.4 of this report). However, audits of this nature can only ever be a snap-shot in time and their main purpose is to provide a consistent and objective assessment of a site's existing quality rather than a full asset audit.

2.3.2 Approach to mapping

As part of the audit process, sites were mapped into their different functions, using the open space typologies and methodology set out within the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment 2016-2036.

The existing open space mapping (Section 5) is accurate as at June 2021 – it only includes open space that is present on the ground². All other developments (either currently being built or in various stages of planning) have been considered in Section 7 of this report.

The open space provision tables (in Section 5) and supply and access maps (Section 6) are based on the up-to-date mapping of open space, which was signed off by the Parish Council in June 2021. This differs to the Babergh and Mid Suffolk 2016 mapping, with the inclusion of Thurston Community College and Thurston Primary Academy, The Black Bourn Valley Nature Reserve and Furze Close amenity green space. Amenity green spaces smaller than 0.15ha have also been mapped (as they provide visual amenity and biodiversity value) but not

² With the exception of Thurston Primary Academy which is currently being built out (June 2021).

included within the analysis – in accordance with the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment methodology.

2.4 Set and Apply Provision Standards

The quantity, quality and accessibility standards set within the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment (2016-2036) have been applied in this Strategy. The quantity and access standards are summarised below.

Table 1 Babergh and Mid Suffolk Quantity and Accessibility Standards

Typology	Quantity standards (ha/1000 population) for analysing existing provision	Quantity standards (ha/1000 population): requirements from new development	Access standard
Allotments	0.3	0.3	All Parishes with a population greater than 1000 people to have an allotment
Amenity Green Space	1.0	See standard for Natural Green Space	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time to be met by amenity greenspace of at least 0.15 ha in size or by a park and recreation ground for parishes with over 200 people
Parks and Recreation Grounds	1.0	1.0	All Parishes with a population greater than 1000 people to have a park and recreation ground. 600 metres (12 - 13 minutes walk time) when considered with amenity green space
Play Space (Children)	0.06	0.06	Parishes with a population of 200 - 1000 people to have a play space; Parishes with a population over 1000 people to have a play space within 600 metres (12-13 minutes' straight line walk time)
Play Space (Youth)	0.04	0.04	Parishes with a population over 1000 people to have a youth play space; Parishes with a population greater than 4000 people to have a youth space within 960 metres (20 minutes' straight line walk time)
Natural Green Space	Natural England Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt)	1.0 to include natural and amenity green space for new provision	ANGSt
Total for new provision		2.40 ha/1000	

2.5 Recommendations

The recommendations address the following key areas:

- Existing open space provision to be protected;
- Existing open space provision to be enhanced;
- Opportunities for re-location/re-designation of open space;
- Identification of areas for new open space provision; and

This information will support the identification of projects for which Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts can be targeted.

3.0 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

3.1 Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment Policy Context

The Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment (Section 3) sets out the policy context which is relevant to this Strategy, which are summarised below.

National Context

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (updated in 2019)
- The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP) The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (2011)
- Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services, (August 2011)
- Sporting Future - A New Strategy for an Active Nation (December 2015)
- Sport England Strategy – 'Towards an Active Nation' (2016-2021)

County/Sub-regional Context

- Joint Strategic Plan Refresh (2016 - 2020)
- Haven Gateway Green Infrastructure Strategy (2008, and 2015 update)
- A joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Suffolk (2012 - 2022)
- Suffolk Nature Strategy (2012)
- In Step with Suffolk – Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2006 – 2016)

Local Context (in relation to Mid Suffolk)

- Mid Suffolk Local Plan (Adopted 1998, first alteration adopted 2006)
- Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (Adopted September 2008, amended by the Cores Strategy Focused Review adopted December 2012)
- Stowmarket Area Action Plan (February 2013)
- Mid Suffolk SPS for Social Infrastructure Including Open Space, Sport and Recreation (Adopted October 2006)
- Play and Communities – A Play Strategy for Mid Suffolk District Council (July 2007)

3.2 Updates to Policy Context

Since the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment was completed, there have been several more national plans and publications of relevance. These are summarised below.

3.2.1 National Context

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (February 2019)

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. The NPPF must be adhered to in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

Within the NPPF, open space is defined as 'All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity'.

The NPPF contains the following references that relate to green infrastructure and open spaces:

- **Para 7** - The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
 - **Para 96** - Access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.
 - **Para 97** - Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:
 - a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings, or land to be surplus to requirements; or
 - b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
 - c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.
 - **Para 98** - Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.
 - **Para 149** - Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such
-

as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure

- **Para 170** - Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

Planning for the Future White Paper (August 2020)

The White Paper was launched in August 2020, and sets out the Government's proposals for a reform of England's planning system to streamline and modernise the planning process, bring a new focus to design and sustainability, improve the system of developer contributions to infrastructure, and ensure more land is available for development where it is needed.

The three pillars to the planning reforms are:

- **Pillar One:** Planning for development including proposals to streamline the Local Plan process - The proposals include the introduction of a form of zoning and a new single statutory sustainable development test at plan examination to replace the current legal and soundness tests. Local Plans should identify three types of land – Growth areas suitable for substantial development, Renewal areas suitable for development, and areas that are Protected. The proposals include a digitised application process and a new interactive web-based map standard for planning documents.
- **Pillar Two:** Planning for beautiful and sustainable places – proposals include: a Fast Track for Beauty, where proposals that come forward that comply with pre-established principles of good design are fast tracked through the planning process; amending the NPPF to ensure targets for mitigating and adapting to climate change and maximising environmental benefits is achieved; a simpler framework for assessing environmental impacts; new homes are fit for a zero-carbon future.
- **Pillar Three:** Planning for infrastructure and connected places - proposals include a replacement to the current Section 106 and CIL processes for securing infrastructure contributions from development proposals.

Consultation on the proposals ran from August to October 2020 and is currently being analysed.

A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (2018)

This 25 Year Environment Plan sets out government action to help the natural world regain and retain good health. It aims to deliver cleaner air and water in our cities and rural landscapes, protect threatened species and provide richer wildlife habitats. It calls for an approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing that puts the environment first.

The 25-year goals are:

1. Clean air.
2. Clean and plentiful water.
3. Thriving plants and wildlife.
4. A reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards such as flooding and drought.
5. Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently.
6. Enhanced beauty, heritage, and engagement with the natural environment.

In addition, pressures on the environment will be managed by:

7. Mitigating and adapting to climate change.
8. Minimising waste.
9. Managing exposure to chemicals.
10. Enhancing biosecurity.

Actions/policies are identified around six key areas: Using and managing land sustainably; Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes; Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing; Increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste; Securing clean, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans; Protecting and improving the global environment.

The Plan sits alongside two other important government strategies. The Industrial Strategy sets out how productivity will be boosted across the UK through five foundations – ideas, people, infrastructure, business, environment and places. Clean Growth is one of the four Grand Challenges laid out in the strategy that will put the UK at the forefront of industries of the future, ensuring that it takes advantage of transformational global trends. The Clean Growth Strategy sets out the UK's reaffirmed ambition to promote the ambitious economic and environmental policies to mitigate climate change and deliver clean, green growth.

Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces (Fields in Trust (FIT) 2019)

The Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces paper makes an economic evaluation of parks and green spaces in the UK as well as valuing improvements in health and wellbeing associated with their frequent use. This is the first research study on parks and greenspaces to use welfare weighting methodology allowing for more informed evidence-based policy decisions.

It is the view of Fields in Trust that few public services have such a wide-ranging, positive impact on local communities as parks and green spaces. Unfortunately, such spaces tend to be valued within local budgets according to their maintenance costs rather than their true dividend to local communities which vastly exceeds such sums because of their multiple benefits. Parks and green spaces can:

- Contribute to a preventative health agenda
 - Reduce future exchequer expenditure
 - Reduce health inequalities
 - Increase social cohesion and equality
-

Although people who visit their park less often than once a month still value the existence of parks and green spaces, frequent park users state significantly higher Willingness to Pay value for parks and green spaces. Further analysis of the data also revealed significant difference in values depending upon a variety of factors including geographical location, size, income and ethnicity. When welfare weighting for income is applied the average Willingness to Pay increases significantly for Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) and lower socio-economic groups.

Whilst there are different drivers for using parks and green spaces across different user groups, the research survey showed clear social motivations for using these spaces across all settings. The report suggests that parks and green spaces are vital democratic spaces where people come together and interact therefore playing an important role in promoting social cohesion and integration.

The report found that parks and green spaces are valued highly by communities and provide a large amount of quantifiable benefit to their local population. The data provided by the report on Total Economic Value (use and non-use) of parks and green spaces is demonstrable for the entire local population thus enabling local authorities for the first time to make a robust, evidence-led business case for the economic and wellbeing value of parks and green space to local communities. This research will enable a strategic approach to the provision of parks and green spaces by identifying areas where investment will have the most significant impact on individuals. It presents a new and compelling argument that, in a different economic climate, the provision of parks and green spaces should be prioritised in areas with lower socio-economic groups and a higher representation of BAME communities given the disproportionately high level of benefits that these groups derive from parks and green spaces.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Global Warming Report (2018)

Climate change represents an urgent and potentially irreversible threat to human societies and the planet. In recognition of this, the overwhelming majority of countries around the world adopted the Paris Agreement in December 2015, the central aim of which includes pursuing efforts to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C. In doing so, these countries, through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), also invited the IPCC to provide a Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emissions pathways.

The report finds that limiting global warming to 1.5°C would require “rapid and far-reaching” transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport, and cities. Global net human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) would need to fall by about 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching ‘net zero’ around 2050.

At Full Council meetings in July 2019 both Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils pledged to set up a taskforce, in partnership with other public sector partners, taking a step forward in becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

Building with Nature Benchmark – a new national green infrastructure benchmark for the UK

Building with Nature provides a framework of quality standards to ensure the design and delivery of high-quality green infrastructure, so that developments will also deliver for the natural world and healthy communities.

Drawing from evidence and good practice, high quality green infrastructure has been defined at each stage of the development process, from planning and design, through to long-term management and maintenance. The standards enable nature friendly features to be integrated throughout the development.

Developers can apply to have their scheme assessed, and planners can have their policy document accredited by Building with Nature. The standards³ are also free to use and can assist with the planning and development of new places and communities.

Although the analysis of GI is not itself covered by the remit of this study, open space forms part of the GI network and the assessment is mindful of the linkages with the concept of GI which looks beyond existing designations, seeking opportunities to increase function and connectivity of assets to maximise the benefits for both people and wildlife.

3.2.2 Local Context

The local policy and health and deprivation context has been reviewed and the key documents are summarised below.

Thurston Neighbourhood Plan (October 2019)

The Thurston neighbourhood plan covers the period 2018-2036 and was adopted in October 2019. It sets out a vision for the future of Thurston, and to guide development in the parish. The plan highlights the current challenge of providing appropriate sustainable development and infrastructure which supports the quality of the village.

There are several objectives within the plan which relate to open space and play facilities:

Section 6 – Community Infrastructure

The plan sets out two objectives to ensure that adequate provision of leisure facilities are provided and to encourage the uptake of sports/fitness/leisure/wellbeing activities in the village by providing facilities that are open for all to use, including those living and working in the wider area.

Currently there are various outdoor sports spaces throughout the village, most of which are used well for informal play. There are also several clubs which use the open spaces, including

³ <https://www.buildingwithnature.org.uk/how-it-works>

football, rugby, cricket and netball. These clubs noted that there is pressure on these facilities with the inability to respond to increased demand within the current open space availability. In terms of play facilities, the parish is deemed to have sufficient park and recreation space, but play provision is deficient. There is a need for a dedicated site for adventurous play area, football area (this could be provided as a MUGA) and a neighbourhood equipped area for play. There are already several developments in the pipeline which are expected to provide additional play facilities.

Based on these objectives and current demand, the strategy for community facilities states that proposals that would result in the loss of existing community facilities will not be supported unless appropriate re-provision is made. Any proposals for new and/or improved community facilities will be supported if they fit the criteria. The provision of a neighbourhood equipment area for play, a MUGA, allotments and adventurous type play area will be supported.

Section 8 – Environment

The plan sets out to protect green spaces of value in and around the village and to enhance green space and wildlife provision. As defined under the NPPF, the plan highlights nine green spaces that fit the criteria to be designated as local green spaces, these are:

- The New Green Open Space Area
- The Recreation Field, Church Road
- Genesta Drive Open Space
- Heather Close Open Space
- Furze Close Open Space
- Hambros Open Space
- Maltings Garth Open Space
- Barton Road Chalk Pit
- School Road Old Gravel Pit Open Space

Any new developments should also include green areas for people, recreation, landscape and wildlife to improve the quality of the environment. The report also highlights that accessible natural green spaces of at least 2ha should be no more than a 5-minute walk from home.

Thurston Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan (PIIP)

The Thurston parish infrastructure plan was approved by the Council in 2018. It sets out the priorities for improvement for parish. In terms of outdoor facilities, the plan sets out larger scale investment for a multi-use games area suitable for various sports games, a community football pitch and a purpose-built recreation area for skateboarding, BMX, scooter, wheelchair and incline skating. For small scale investment, the plan highlights investment for a dog park.

Health and Deprivation Context

Health profile for Mid Suffolk

Public Health England have published the 2018 Health Profile for Mid Suffolk. A summary is provided below⁴:

- The health of people in Mid Suffolk is generally better than the England average.
- Life expectancy is higher than the England average for both males and females. The England average is 79 for men and 83 for women, whereas the Mid Suffolk life expectancy for men is 81 and 85 for women.
- In year 6, 14.2% of children are classed as obese, better than the average for England.

Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

The Indices of Deprivations 2019 provides a set of relative measure of deprivation for small areas (Lower-layer Super Output Areas) across England, based on seven different domains of deprivation:

- Income Deprivation
- Employment Deprivation
- Education, Skills and Training Deprivation
- Health Deprivation and Disability
- Crime
- Barriers to Housing and Services
- Living Environment Deprivation

Each of these domains is based on a basket of indicators. As far as possible, each indicator is based on data from the most recent time point available.

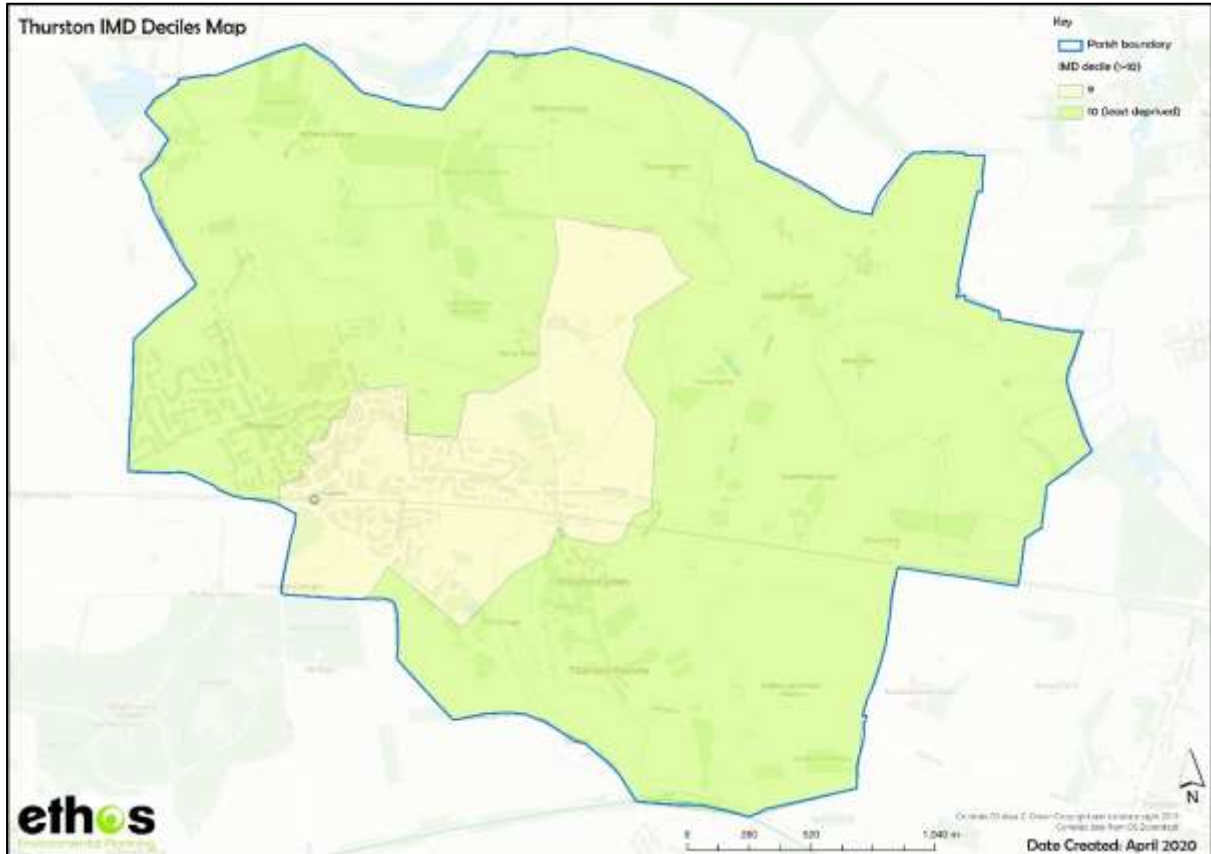
The Index of Multiple Deprivation combines information from the seven domains to produce an overall relative measure of deprivation.

As can be seen from Figure 2 below, levels of deprivation within Thurston are very low, with the Parish scoring IMD deciles of 9 and 10 (10 being the lowest relative measure of deprivation).

Improving access to quality green space has the potential to improve health outcomes for the whole population.

⁴ <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles/data#page/1/gid/1938132696/pat/6/par/E12000006/ati/201/are/E07000203>

Figure 2 IMD in Thurston Parish



4.0 LOCAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT (STEP 1)

4.1 Thurston Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan (PIIP)

The Thurston Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan (2018) identifies the following needs and aspirations in relation to open space provision (these have been informed using consultation data from the Neighbourhood Plan work⁵):

- A multi-use games area (MUGA) with an anti-vandal outdoor fenced area with built in goal post units for various types of sports games, such as football, basketball or tennis.
- A purpose-built recreational area for skateboarding, BMX, scooter, wheelchair and inline skating.
- A Community Football pitch with permanent goals erected.
- Sustainable means of access which provides a network of cycleways and paths suitable for all users and which links housing and employment with services and facilities.
- Provision of a Dog Park would give benefit to the large number of residents with dogs and would reduce the opportunity for owners to exercise their animals in inappropriate places.

4.2 Consultation carried out as part of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment

As part of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Study (2016-2036), a town and parish council survey was undertaken during March to May 2017⁶.

The town/parish council survey was completed by 75 out of the 199 parishes in Babergh and Mid Suffolk. 64% of town/parish councils noted there was a need for additional or improved open space, play and outdoor recreation facilities within their town or parish.

The aspects of most common concern were:

- That there are not enough areas for teenagers e.g. skateparks, shelters etc., and the quality of existing children's play areas;
- The need for additional Multi-use games areas and in some cases securing access to existing MUGAs on school sites; and

⁵ The Neighbourhood Plan has consulted widely with the community over the course of its life and has held public meetings; carried out surveys and questionnaires; sought comments from businesses, those running community facilities; those running clubs and providing services to residents. It has held monthly meetings and monthly community engagement surgeries.

⁶ The brief for the study required that a technical assessment was undertaken, rather than a full local needs assessment/extensive consultation to inform the recommended open space standards. Therefore, evidence from existing consultation; existing standards and policies; existing provision; national guidance; benchmarking with other authorities; and deliverability considerations have been used when developing standards for provision of open space.

- The need for improvements to footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths.

In terms of quality, the respondents identified the following as a high priority in terms of open space:

- They should be easy to get to (and get around) for all members of the community.
 - They should be safe and secure for those using them.
 - Equipment and grounds should be of high quality and well maintained. They should be clean and free from litter and graffiti.
 - They should provide opportunities for dog-walking with measures to address dog fouling.
-

5.0 AUDIT OF EXISTING OPEN SPACE ASSETS

5.1 General approach

This Strategy categorises open space into the following typologies (in accordance with the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment 2016-2036):

Table 2 Open space typologies

Typologies with mapped standards	Typologies mapped but no standards ⁷
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allotments • Amenity Green Space (>0.15ha) • Accessible Natural Green Space • Parks and Recreation Grounds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Parks and Recreation Grounds -Outdoor Sports Space (Fixed) • Play Space (Children) • Play Space (Youth) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Churchyards and Cemeteries • Amenity Green Space (<0.15ha) • Sports Club Space

Typologies with standards

5.1.1 Allotments

Allotments provide areas for people to grow their own produce and plants. The Allotment Act of 1922 defines the terms “allotment garden” as:

“an allotment not exceeding 40 poles in extent which is wholly or mainly cultivated by the occupier for the production of vegetable or fruit crops for consumption by himself or his family.”

Although allotments are not public open space (as access is controlled), they form an important part of the open space provision/community facilities within the parish and standards for accessing existing provision and new provision from development are required.

5.1.2 Amenity Green Space

Amenity green space is considered to include those spaces (minimum 0.15ha in size) open to free and spontaneous use by the public, but neither laid out or managed for a specific function as a park, public playing field or recreation ground; nor managed as a natural or semi-natural habitat. These areas of open space will be of varied size, but are likely to share the following characteristics:

- Unlikely to be physically demarcated by walls or fences.
- Predominantly lain down to (mown) grass.
- Unlikely to have identifiable entrance points (unlike parks).
- They may have shrub and tree planting, and occasionally formal planted flower beds.

⁷ An explanation for not developing standards for these typologies is outlines in the following sections

- They may occasionally have other recreational facilities and fixtures (such as play equipment or ball courts).

Amenity green spaces smaller than 0.15 ha are not included within the analysis for this typology, as it is considered that these sites will have limited recreation function and therefore should not count towards open space provision.

5.1.3 Accessible Natural Green Space

Accessible natural and semi-natural green space covers a variety of partly or wholly accessible spaces including meadows, woodland and copses all of which share a trait of having natural characteristics and wildlife value, but which are also open to public use and enjoyment.

These spaces can form important ‘green corridors’ for both wildlife and people, especially when linked with the public rights of way network, cycle paths and rivers etc. These spaces form an important part of Green Infrastructure of an area and can be important in delivering ecosystem services and attracting visitors across administrative boundaries.

5.1.4 Park and Recreation Grounds

Parks and Recreation Grounds take on many forms, and may embrace a wide range of functions including:

- Play space of many kinds
- Provision for a range of formal pitch and fixed sports
- Provision of outdoor gyms and fitness trails
- Informal recreation and sport
- Providing attractive walks and cycle routes to work
- Offering landscape and amenity features
- Areas of formal planting
- Providing area for ‘events’
- Providing habitats for wildlife
- Dog walking

When mapping this type of provision, a multi-functional approach to mapping has been adopted, where play spaces, youth spaces and fixed outdoor sports facilities (e.g. tennis courts, bowling greens, outdoor gyms) are separately mapped.

In calculating the quantity supply for parks and recreation grounds, the total figure includes the general park area (including the area covered by playing pitches) plus the fixed outdoor sports facilities. The figure excludes the provision of children and youth play spaces which have a separate typology.

5.1.5 Play Space (Children and Youth)

Children and young people will play/‘hang out’ in almost all publicly accessible “space” ranging from the street, town centres and squares, parks, playing fields, grassed areas etc. as

well as the more recognisable play and youth facility areas such as equipped playgrounds, youth shelters, BMX and skateboard parks, Multi-Use Games Areas etc.

Children's play spaces are areas of play that cater for the needs of children up to and around 12 years. Play Areas are an essential way of creating safe but adventurous places for children of varying ages to play and learn. The emphasis in play area management is shifting away from straightforward and formal equipment such as slide and swings towards creating areas where imagination and natural learning can flourish through the use of landscaping and natural building materials and the creation of areas that need exploring.

Youth play spaces are broadly for the 13 to 16/17 age group, and which might include facilities like skateboard parks, basketball courts and 'free access' Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs). In practice, there will always be some blurring around the edges in terms of younger children using equipment aimed for youths and vice versa.

Typologies with no standards

5.1.6 Churchyards and cemeteries

Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts have many churches and cemeteries, and these provide significant aesthetic value and space for informal recreation such as walking and relaxing. Many are also important in terms of biodiversity, particularly closed churchyards. Their importance for informal recreation, aesthetic value and contribution towards biodiversity must be acknowledged, and as such, investment in their upkeep, maintenance and quality is an important factor.

Churchyards and cemeteries have been identified and mapped where known, however, no quantity or access standard for provision were set, as it is outside the scope of the study to make recommendations related to requirements for new provision.

5.1.7 Education

Many schools and colleges have open space and sports facilities within their grounds. These may range from a small playground to large playing fields with several sports pitches. More often than not, public access to these spaces is restricted or forbidden. Nevertheless, many of the sports facilities are used by local people on both an informal and formal basis.

Quantity and access standards were not proposed for education sites. This is because they are not openly accessible to the public and whilst important to the local community, there is less opportunity for the Councils to influence their provision and management.

5.1.8 Amenity Green Space (<0.15ha)

The minimum size of a space that will be considered acceptable and count towards open space provision is recommended to be 0.15ha in size (about the size of a mini football pitch). This will avoid a proliferation of small amenity spaces which have no real recreation function. Although no provision standards were set (due to these spaces having no/limited recreational

function), these small amenity spaces have been identified and mapped where known as they form part of the Green Infrastructure network and contribute to visual amenity.

5.1.9 Sports Club Space

Outdoor sports space with limited public access have also been recorded and mapped where known. Sports club space makes up an important part of outdoor sports provision across the District and forms an important part of the community facilities. Sports club spaces have been mapped separately to publicly accessible sites, to determine exact provision of the different types of provision.

5.2 Existing provision of open space

5.2.1 Open space provision in Thurston Parish

The existing provision of open space is based on the desktop mapping and site surveys undertaken by Ethos Environmental Planning during March 2020, which used the mapping from the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment (2016-2036) as the basis. Figure 3 provides an overview of the open space provision within the parish.

It should be noted that Furze Close Open Space was not included in the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment, as it was considered to be private land due to the presence of private signage. However, the parish council have confirmed that it is public open space, and so it has been included in this Strategy. Although Barton Road Chalk Pit has been included on the map below, it has not been included within any of the open space analysis, as it is fenced off and not currently accessible.

In addition, Figure 3 also shows amenity green spaces that are smaller than 0.15ha, as although not classed as open space in this strategy, they provide important visual amenity and form part of the Green Infrastructure network within the parish. These smaller amenity green spaces include Hambros Open Space (which is 0.09ha in size), which is included within the Parish Neighbourhood Plan as being locally important.

Following comments from the Parish Council on the draft report, the open space map and quantity table below has been updated (June 2021) to include the following sites: Thurston Community College (Education); Thurston Primary Academy (currently being build out) (Education); and The Black Bourn Valley Nature Reserve (Accessible Natural Green Space).

Table 3 below shows the existing provision of open space in hectares and ha/1000 population and numbers of sites across the Parish (as at June 2021).

Figure 3 Open space within Thurston Parish

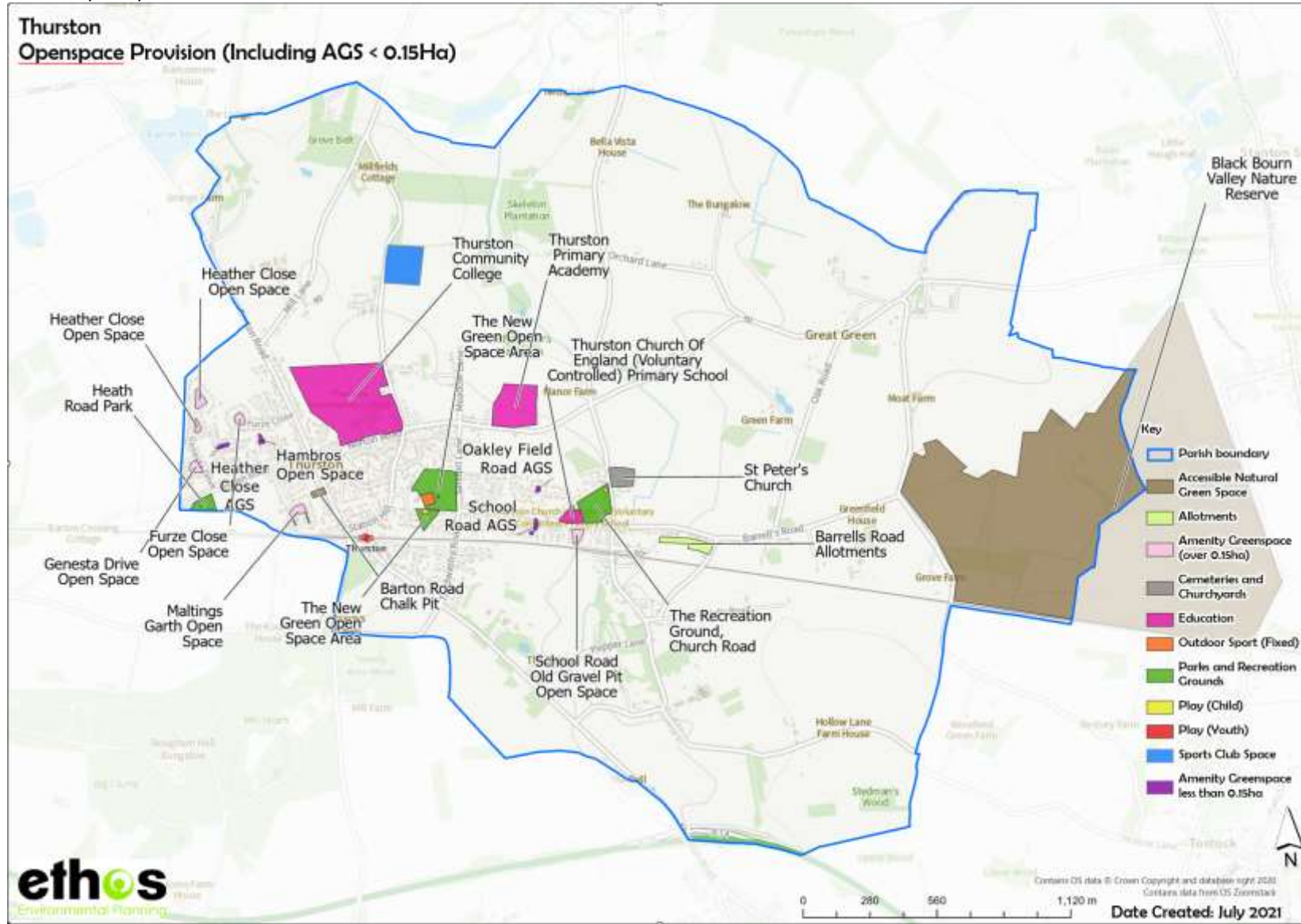


Table 3: Summary of existing provision of open space within Thurston Parish (numbers of sites by typology, ha and ha/1000)

Typology	Ha	Ha/1000 ⁸	No. of sites
Allotments	0.73	0.22	1
Amenity Green Space (>0.15 ha)	1.21	0.36	5 ⁹
Parks and Recreation Grounds	4.98	1.5	3
Play (Child)	0.08	0.02	3
Play (Youth)	0.01	0	2
Accessible Natural green Space	123.6	37.17	1
Cemeteries and Churchyards	0.78	0.23	1
Education	14.02	4.22	3
Sports club space	2.45	0.74	1
Amenity Green Space (<0.15ha) ¹⁰	0.36	0.11	4

⁸ Using ONS 2017 mid year population estimate

⁹ Heather Close open spaces have been classed as one site, based on the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan

¹⁰ This includes Hambros Open Space (0.09ha), which is included within the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan. In addition to these smaller amenity green spaces, there are also a number of amenity road side verges which contribute to the visual amenity and GI within the parish, however these have not been mapped as part of this strategy.

6.0 APPLYING LOCAL STANDARDS

6.1 Introduction

This part of the report uses the standards set within the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment (2016-2036) (summarised in Table 1) to analyse open space provision and supply within Thurston Parish. This section discusses the application of the standards and their components in respect of ‘quantity’, ‘quality’, and ‘access’.

6.2 Application of quantity standards

6.2.1 Current supply and access against the standards

Table 4 below shows the existing supply (ha) of open space for each typology within the Parish. The supply is calculated using the population figures (ONS mid-year 2017 estimate) and the quantity of open space compared to what the requirements for open space are against the standards (which are summarised in Table 1).

Table 4 Provision and supply of open space against the quantity standards

Typology	Existing (Ha)	Existing (Ha/1000 ¹¹)	Requirement (Ha)	Requirement (Ha/1000 i.e. the quantity standard)	Supply (ha)	Supply (ha/1000)
Allotments	0.73	0.22	1.00	0.30	-0.27	-0.08
Amenity Green Space (>0.15 ha)	1.21	0.36	3.33	1.0	-2.12	-0.64
Parks and Recreation Grounds	4.98	1.5	3.33	1.0	1.65	0.5
Play (Child)	0.08	0.02	0.20	0.06	-0.12	-0.04
Play Youth	0.01	0	0.13	0.04	-0.12	-0.04

Positive figures show where the Parish meets the quantity standard for the open space typology, and negative figures show where there is a shortfall in supply against the quantity standard.

However, it is important that the supply figures are not considered in isolation - the access standards (summarised in Table 1 and analysed in Figures 4 to 7 and Table 5) and quality of existing open spaces (covered in Section 6.4) need to be considered alongside these supply figures. A summary of how the parish performs against the quantity, quality and access standards is also provided in Table 5 below.

¹¹ Using 3,325 (ONS 2017 mid year population estimate)

Although these figures highlight where there are shortfalls in supply against the standards and therefore where new provision should be sought, new provision may not be achievable (unless, for example, through new development). These figures can help inform decisions about the form of new open spaces and improvements to existing open spaces. This is covered in Section 7.4 when assessing the impacts of new development on existing open space supply, and the open space requirements from new development.

Table 5 Summary of how Thurston Parish performs against the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment standards

Typology	Quantity and Access Standard	Does the parish meet the open space standards (quantity, access and quality)?
Allotments	0.3ha/1000 All Parishes with a population greater than 1000 people to have an allotment	The parish meets the access standard for allotments, however against the quantity standard there is a shortfall. This could indicate a need for additional allotment space to meet existing needs, however the parish have not identified this as a priority within their PIIP. The existing allotment was assessed as being of good quality.
Amenity green space (>0.15ha)	1.0 ha/1000 600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time to be met by amenity greenspace of at least 0.15 ha in size or by a park and recreation ground for parishes with over 200 people	The parish meets the access standard for amenity green space, however against the quantity standard there is a shortfall. This could indicate a need for additional amenity green space to meet existing needs, however there is a good supply of parks and recreation grounds which also provide access to recreational space. Existing amenity green space was generally assessed as being of good quality, with the exception of School Road amenity green space, which was assessed as being of average quality.
Parks and Recreation Grounds	1.0ha/1000 All Parishes with a population greater than 1000 people to have a park and recreation ground. 600 metres (12 – 13 minutes walk time) when considered with amenity green space	The parish meets both the access standard and quantity standard for parks and recreation grounds. Existing parks and recreation grounds were generally assessed as being of good quality, with the exception of Heath Road Recreational Area, which was assessed as being of average quality. However, the PIIP highlights the need for a community football pitch with permanent goals, and a dog exercise park. This could potentially be provided on site through new development, or through changes to existing open space (could be funded via developer contributions).

Play Space (Child)	0.06ha/1000 Parishes with a population of 200 - 1000 people to have a play space; Parishes with a population over 1000 people to have a play space within 600 metres (12-13 minutes' straight line walk time).	The parish meets the access standard for children's play space, however against the quantity standard there is a shortfall. This could indicate a need for additional play space provision to meet existing needs, however the parish have not identified this as a priority within their PIIP. Play spaces were found to be of good quality, although the quality audit did note that the play value/size of existing play areas could be improved through installing additional play equipment.
Play Space (Youth)	0.04ha/1000 Parishes with a population over 1000 people to have a youth play space; Parishes with a population greater than 4000 people to have a youth space within 960 metres (20 minutes' straight line walk time)	<p>The parish meets the access standard for youth play space, however against the quantity standard there is a shortfall. This could indicate a need for additional youth play space provision to meet existing needs. In addition, the quality audit found that the existing two youth play spaces (both single basketball hoops with a kick wall and small area of hardstanding) could be improved, as they have limited play value.</p> <p>The PIIP also highlights the need/aspiration for a MUGA and a purpose-built recreational area for skateboarding, BMX, scooter, wheelchair and inline skating. These facilities could potentially be delivered on-site as part of new developments, or through pooling developer contributions to improve existing provision.</p>
Accessible Natural Green Space	<p>Natural England Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGSt) recommend that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural greenspace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home; • at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home; • one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home; and 	<p>The Black Bourn Valley Nature Reserve (approx. 123ha in size) meets the ANGst standards for 20ha sites (partially) and 100ha sites (fully). However when the 300m buffer is applied there are large gaps in access.</p> <p>The site is not designated as a Local Nature Reserve.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home; plus • a minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population. 	
--	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

6.3 Application of access standards

The access maps for play space (both children and youth) have used a walk time analysis which is based on the road and path network, using a walking speed of 3.1mph¹². A walk time buffer of 15 minutes has been applied to allotments for illustrative purposes only (as the access standard for this typology relates to the provision of an allotment in parishes with over 1000 population). This walk time analysis is more accurate than the basic buffer analysis, which is based on distance only, as it takes account of the road network/barriers to access. The walk time analysis works well for play spaces, as they are generally relatively small spaces, with only one access point. The more basic buffer access analysis approach has been used for amenity green space and parks and recreation grounds (when considered with amenity green space).

Table 6 highlights the key access issues within the Parish.

¹² This is in line with the British Heart Foundation state as an average walking pace on country and forestry footpaths: <https://www.bhf.org.uk/how-you-can-help/events/training-zone/walking-training-zone/walking-faqs>

Figure 4 Access to allotments (a 15 minute walk time buffer has been applied for illustrative purposes only – the access standard for existing allotment provision is that every parish with over 1000 population has an allotment)



Figure 5 Access to amenity green space and parks and recreation grounds (600m buffer)

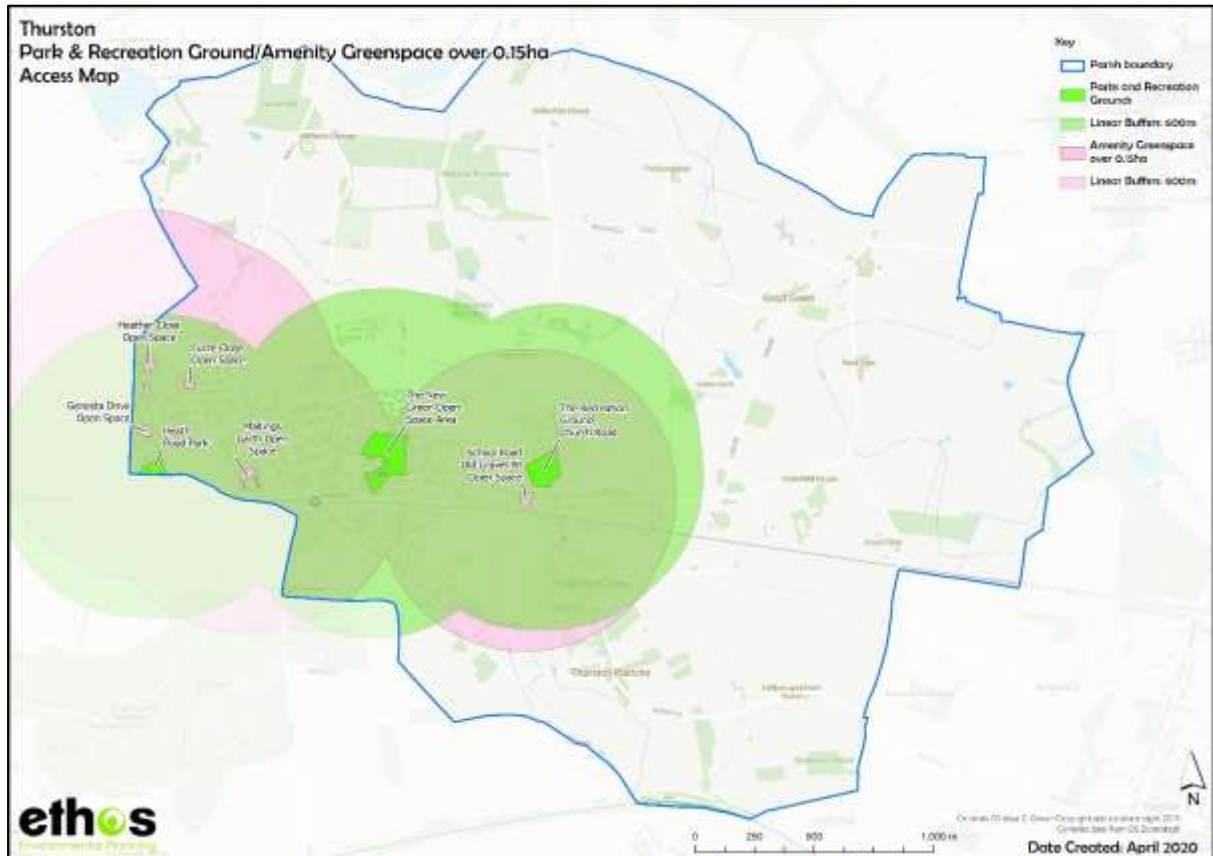


Figure 6 Access to children’s play space (12 minutes walk-time buffer)

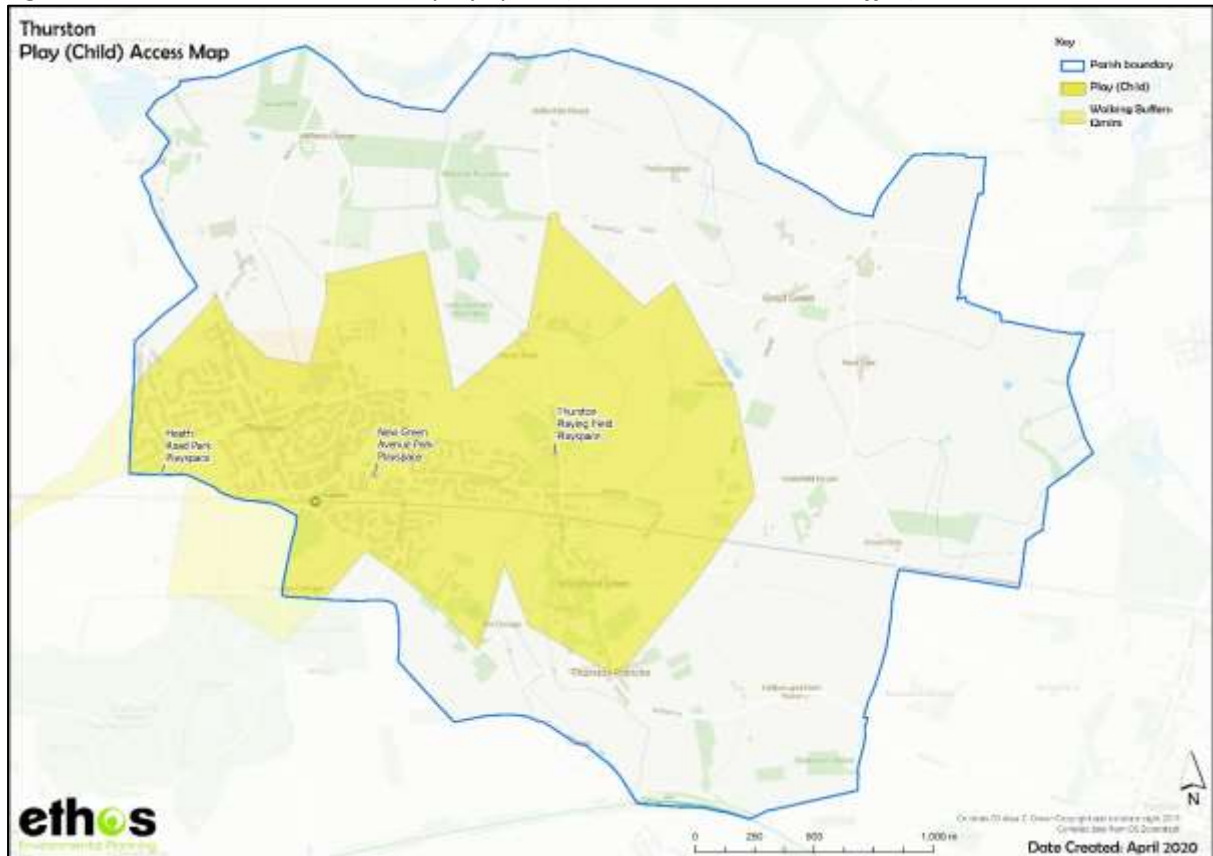


Figure 7 Access to youth play space (20 minutes walk-time buffer)

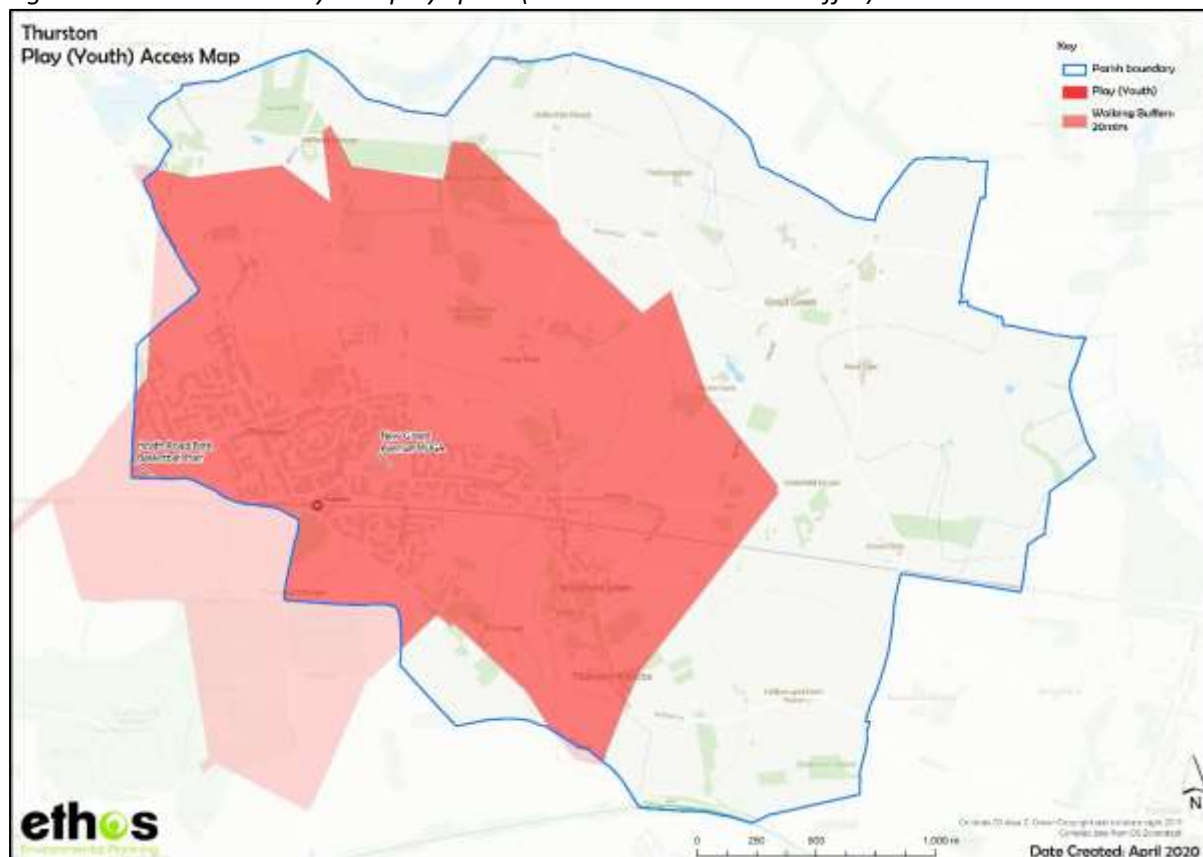


Table 6 Summary of access issues

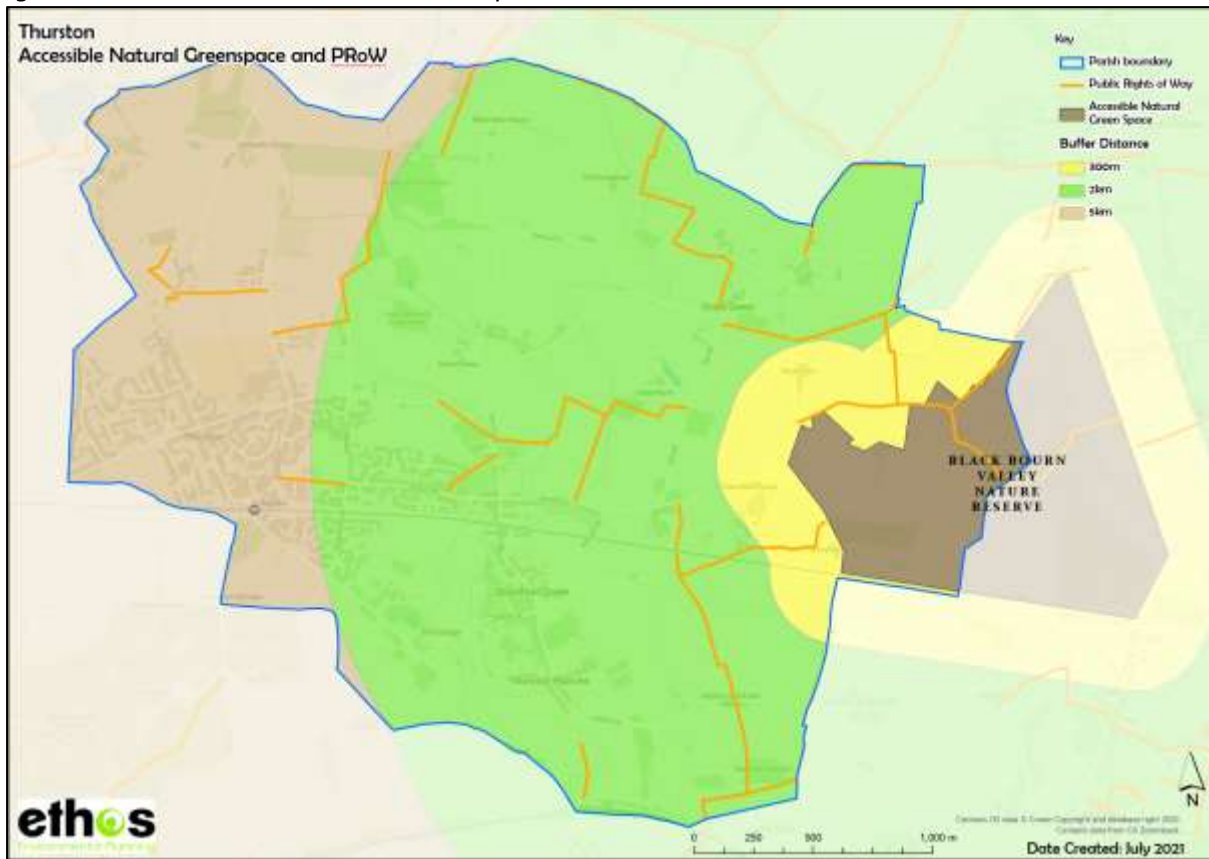
Typology	Key Access Issues
Allotments	The single allotment within the parish is situated at the very eastern edge of the village of Thurston (the key populated area within the parish). This meets the access standard which requires parishes with over 1000 population to have an allotment, however it can be seen than when a 15 minute walking buffer is applied, there is a gap in access for residents in the western part of the village. Therefore, the priority for new provision e.g. from new development would be in the western part of the village if feasible.
Amenity Green Space and Parks and Recreation Grounds	There is good access to amenity green space and parks and recreation grounds across the key populated area.
Play Space (Children)	There is good access to children's play space across the key populated area.
Play Space (Youth)	There is good access to youth play space across the key populated area.

Access to Accessible Natural Green Space and Public Rights of Way (PROW)

As shown in Figure 8 below, Black Bourn Valley Nature Reserve provides the parish with access against the ANGSt Standards for a 20ha site within 2km (partial), and a 100ha site within 5km. There is limited access when the 300m access buffer is applied. It is also noted that the PROW network provides an important element of access within the parish, between open spaces, and connecting with the wider countryside.

The PIIP highlights the need for ‘sustainable means of access which provides a network of cycleways and paths suitable for all users and which links housing and employment with services and facilities’.

Figure 8 Accessible Natural Greenspace and PROW within Thurston Parish



6.4 Application of quality standards

6.4.1 Quality of open space – audit methodology

The quality audits were undertaken using a standardised methodology and consistent approach. However, audits of this nature can only ever be a snap-shot in time and their main purpose is to provide a consistent and objective assessment of a site’s existing quality rather than a full asset audit. Site visits were undertaken in March 2020.

The methodology repeated the quality audit methodology undertaken as part of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment, and is outlined below:

The quality audits were designed to focus on the key open spaces. It was not possible to survey all sites due to access restrictions, namely private sports grounds, education sites and allotments. Amenity green spaces smaller than 0.15ha in size and churchyards and cemeteries were also excluded. This has meant that the quality audits have focused on the key open spaces and play areas i.e. parks and recreation grounds, large amenity green spaces, children’s and youth play spaces and accessible natural green spaces.

Sites were visited, and a photographic record made of key features, along with a description of the site and recommendations for improvements. An assessment of the quality of the open space was undertaken using the following criteria, which is based on the Green Flag Award criteria:

1. Welcoming
2. Good and Safe Access
3. Community Involvement
4. Safe Equipment and Facilities
5. Appropriate Provision of Facilities
6. Quality/Management of Facilities and Infrastructure
7. Personal Security on Site
8. Dog Fouling
9. Litter and Waste Management
10. Grounds/Habitat Management

For each of the criteria a score of between 1 -10 is given, where 1 is very poor and 10 is very good. The scores for each site are added together and the mean calculated based on how many criteria were scored (e.g. If ‘Community involvement’ is given N/A for a site, the total will be divided by 9). This mean is then multiplied by 7 (which follows the Green Flag Award scoring system) to produce the final score from which sites are grouped into 3 categories – good (those sites with a score of between 50 and 70), average (those sites with a score of between 28 and 49) or poor (those sites with a score of between 7 and 27).

6.4.2 Quality of open space – audit findings

A summary of the quality audit results is provided in Table 7 below. The full excel spreadsheet with scores for each criteria is provided at Appendix 1.

As can be seen, the majority of open spaces were assessed as being of good quality (grade A), however two were assessed as being just within the average category (grade B). No spaces were assessed as being poor quality (grade C). The average quality open spaces were School Road Amenity Green Space and Heath Road Recreational Area. However, even those spaces which were assessed as being good quality, still have some recommendations for improvements.

In terms of play spaces, for youth play spaces the main recommendation was to upgrade the existing provision (currently the only youth play spaces within the Parish are two single basketball hoops with an area of hard standing and kick wall– one in The New Green Open Space Area and the other in Heath Road Recreational Area. These facilities could be upgraded to a full MUGA (or alternative youth provision), which would greatly improve the play value. It was also noted that the play value of children’s play spaces could be improved with the installation of additional items of play equipment.

A general observation from the site visits was that dogs were not allowed within the parks and recreation grounds (apart from on the main path through The New Green Open Space Area).

Table 7 Results of quality audits (March 2020) in Thurston Parish

Name	Typology	Description	Suggestions	Ethos Score	Grade
Barrells Road Allotments	Allotments	Attractive large allotment site appears well used and well maintained. N.b. these are private allotments and the landowner operates a waiting list. Waiting list/availability of plots was not assessed as part of this Strategy.	No parking for vehicle access for those that may need to drive/transport materials, but difficult to rectify this. Potential to install notice boards. Gate was not locked, so site not very secure, but this may not be an issue.	54	A
School Road	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity grass with scattered trees, and narrow hard surfaced path network. Generally a bit tired looking.	Clear debris from path. Enhance visual amenity and biodiversity value with wildflower areas and additional tree/shrub planting. Could install benches.	49	B
School Road Old Gravel Pit	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity grass with scattered trees, and narrow hard surfaced path network.	Clear debris from path. Enhance visual amenity and biodiversity value with wildflower areas and additional tree/shrub planting. Could install benches.	53	A
The Recreation Ground, Church Road	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Recreation ground next to village hall with parking area, pavilion, preschool, unfenced children's play area (good condition but room to expand to improve play value if need identified), football and cricket pitch, hard surfaced paths, benches and bins, with stone obelisk commemorating purchase of ground. Locked storage container. Dogs not allowed on pitches.	Play value of children's play area could be improved with additional equipment. Storage container in poor condition & would benefit from upgrading. Some benches would benefit from upgrading. Old signage needs replacing and redundant fence posts removing. Wildflower margins could be developed to improve biodiversity value.	55	A

Name	Typology	Description	Suggestions	Ethos Score	Grade
The New Green Open Space Area	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Large park surrounding community centre, with car parking area, good quality modern children's play area (fenced), single basketball/kick wall with hard standing, small football goals/kick around area, bowls lawn/club, scattered trees, bins benches and pond area surrounded by hedgerows (accessed via two pedestrian gates) with benches, litter bin and scattered trees. Dual use path with lighting. No dogs allowed on grass. N.b. A new gym trail (including Saturn Carousel; Free Runner; Cross Trainer; Power Bike; Combination Street Work Out; Dip Bench; Bench and Wide Overhead Ladder) and community shelter was installed in June 2020.	There is space available to upgrade the basketball hoop to a full MUGA or additional youth provision. Improve signage in children's play area and redundant post (or replace missing sign). Repair/replace poor condition benches around the pond. The steep grassy banks would be ideal for developing/managing wildflower areas. The visual amenity and biodiversity value of the low lying area where the football kick around is has potential for improving e.g. by installing a meandering path with tree and shrub planting and wildflower areas (whilst maintaining open areas for kicking a ball around and youth provision).	56	A
Maltings Garth Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity grass area with a few scattered trees surrounded by houses. There is one clear desire line running through the grass, linking to hard surfaced path adjacent to houses.	Potential to improve visual amenity & biodiversity value of site with additional tree and shrub planting (native and berry rich) and wildflower areas for pollinators. There may be some benefit in installing a stone dust path along existing desire line.	55	A

Name	Typology	Description	Suggestions	Ethos Score	Grade
Heath Road Recreational Area	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Small local park on quiet lane, overlooked by houses, bordered by hedgerows and trees. Entrance via pedestrian gate with litter/dog bin and dog fouling sign designed by children. No dogs allowed. Unfenced children's play area with benches & bin (good quality swing set and climb and slide, although see saw would benefit from repainting). Single basketball hoop with kick wall and hard standing.	Issue with mole hills on site which makes it quite dangerous to run around. Opportunity for tree planting/wildflower margins to enhance biodiversity. Space for additional play items to improve the play value of the children's play area e.g. equipment for older children, and potential to upgrade basketball hoop to a MUGA if need identified. Could install path to play area. Signage on the entrance gate could be improved/more welcoming.	49	B
Genesta Drive Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity grass area surrounded by road and housing, with scattered mature trees and shrubs.	Good biodiversity value with a variety of tree species and thicket/shrub areas providing habitat for nesting birds and other wildlife. Biodiversity could be improved with wildflower areas/provision of nectar for pollinators.	55	A
Heather Close Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity grass area overlooked by houses with scattered trees, scrub and shrub thickets, spring bulbs and a lovely planter (looks like the local community have provided this) with spring bulbs.	This would be a lovely site for wildflower margins or areas around trees to improve biodiversity value, particularly for pollinators.	56	A

Name	Typology	Description	Suggestions	Ethos Score	Grade
Furze Close Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Area mainly consisting of scattered trees, with large pine trees and varied ground flora with different plants and spring bulbs. There is a large pile of cut wood/brush providing habitat for insects and wildlife. Overlooked by houses. Private signs on trees.	Important area for wildlife and visual amenity but does not appear to be freely publicly accessible (there are private signs). Wildlife value of site should be retained and developed further with the community.	50	A
Hambros Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Small area of amenity grass with scattered trees behind houses, accessed via narrow path between houses. Not obvious it is there and feels more like private gardens as rear conservatories back right on to it.	Perhaps a small sign would make it obvious the space is for use by the general community. Moss growing on edge of path should be cleared as it is slippery. Wildflower areas/additional planting to enhance biodiversity.	48	B

7.0 FUTURE NEED FOR OPEN SPACE

7.1 Introduction

This section of the report considers the impacts of planned development on the existing supply of open space, as well as requirements for new open space provision against the quantity, access and quality standards from the predicted population growth resulting from the development.

The predicted population increase is calculated using an average household size of 2.3 persons.

7.2 Overview of new and planned development

Table 8 below provides a summary of new and planned development within the Parish, the predicted population increase, and the amount of open space being provided/proposed (calculated from mapping the open space set out within the development layout plans).

Figure 9 provides an overview of the locations of each new/proposed development in relation to existing open space within the Parish.

Pre-applications have not been considered as part of this assessment.

Table 8 Overview of new and planned development

Development	Stage (as at March 2020)	Number of dwellings	Predicted population increase	Proposed/planned open space (mapped and calculated from layout plans).
Land at Norton Road (ref. 5070/16)	Phase 1 has full planning permission and has commenced on site. Phase 2 has been submitted for reserved matters.	Outline planning permission for 200 dwellings	460 (based on 200 dwellings)	Phase 1: 0.07ha of amenity green space Phase 2: 1.19ha of amenity green space; 0.06ha of children's play space 2.49ha of accessible natural green space *In the Phase 2 application it is stated there will be space for community food growing (area not known).
Land West of Ixworth Road (ref. 4963/16)	Full planning permission, commenced on site.	248	570	1.30ha of amenity green space; 0.01ha of outdoor sport fixed; 0.03ha of children's play space.

Development	Stage (as at March 2020)	Number of dwellings	Predicted population increase	Proposed/planned open space (mapped and calculated from layout plans).
Land South of Norton Road (ref. 2797/16)	Full planning permission, commenced on site.	175	403	1.97ha of amenity green space 0.20ha of allotments
Land at Meadow Lane (ref. 4942/16)	Full planning permission.	64	147	0.39ha of amenity green space
Land West of Barton Road (ref. 02232/17)	Full planning permission.	129	297	0.45ha of amenity green space
Beyton Road (ref. 3486/19)	Outline planning permission.	210	483	1.58ha of amenity green space
Ixworth Road (ref. DC/19/02090)	Planning submitted, currently no decision.	210	483	0.11ha of allotments; 2.25ha of amenity green space; 0.1ha of children's play space.
Granary Site, Station Hill	Outline planning permission	97	223	None
Total		1,333	3,066	12.13ha

Figure 9 Location of new/proposed development sites in relation to existing open space



7.3 Access to existing open space in relation to development site boundaries

Figure 10 Access to allotments (15 minutes' walk time – for illustrative purposes only)

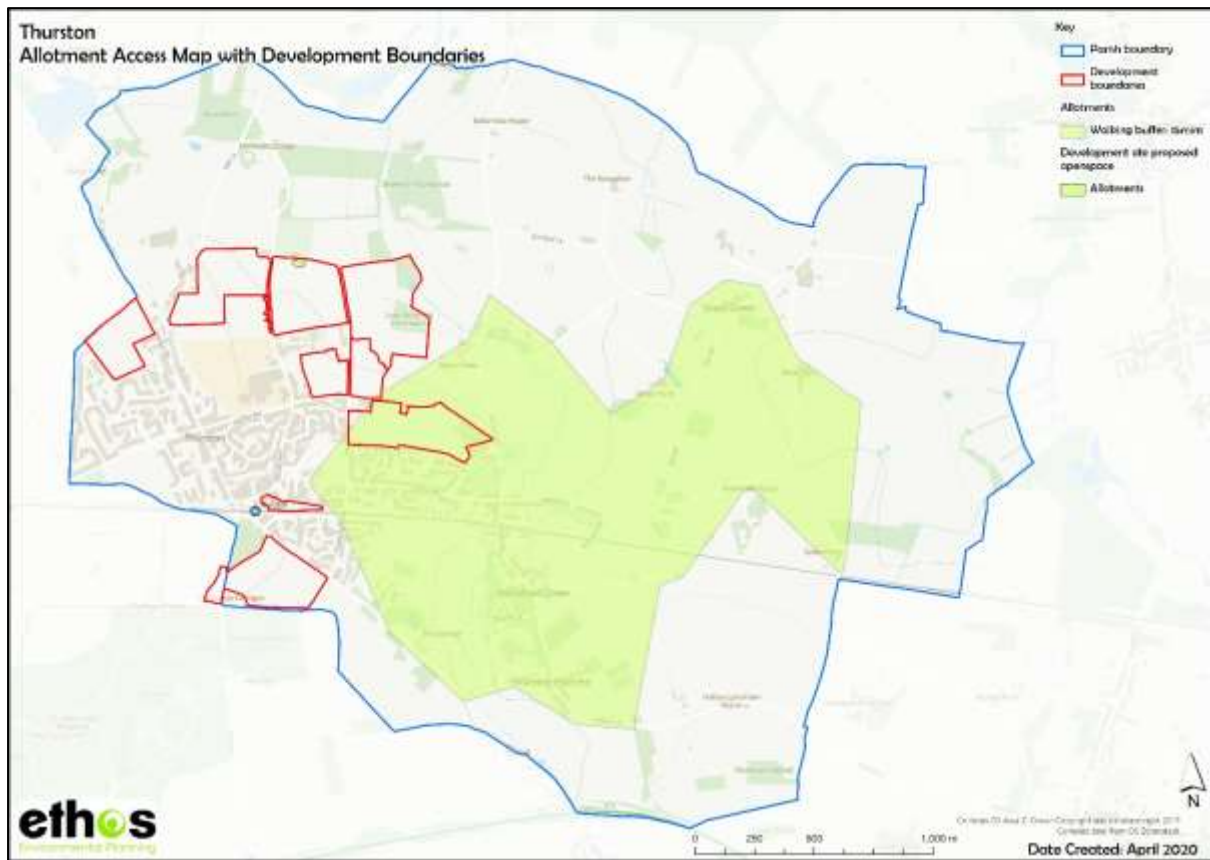


Figure 11 Access to Parks and Recreation Grounds and Amenity Green Space (600m buffer)

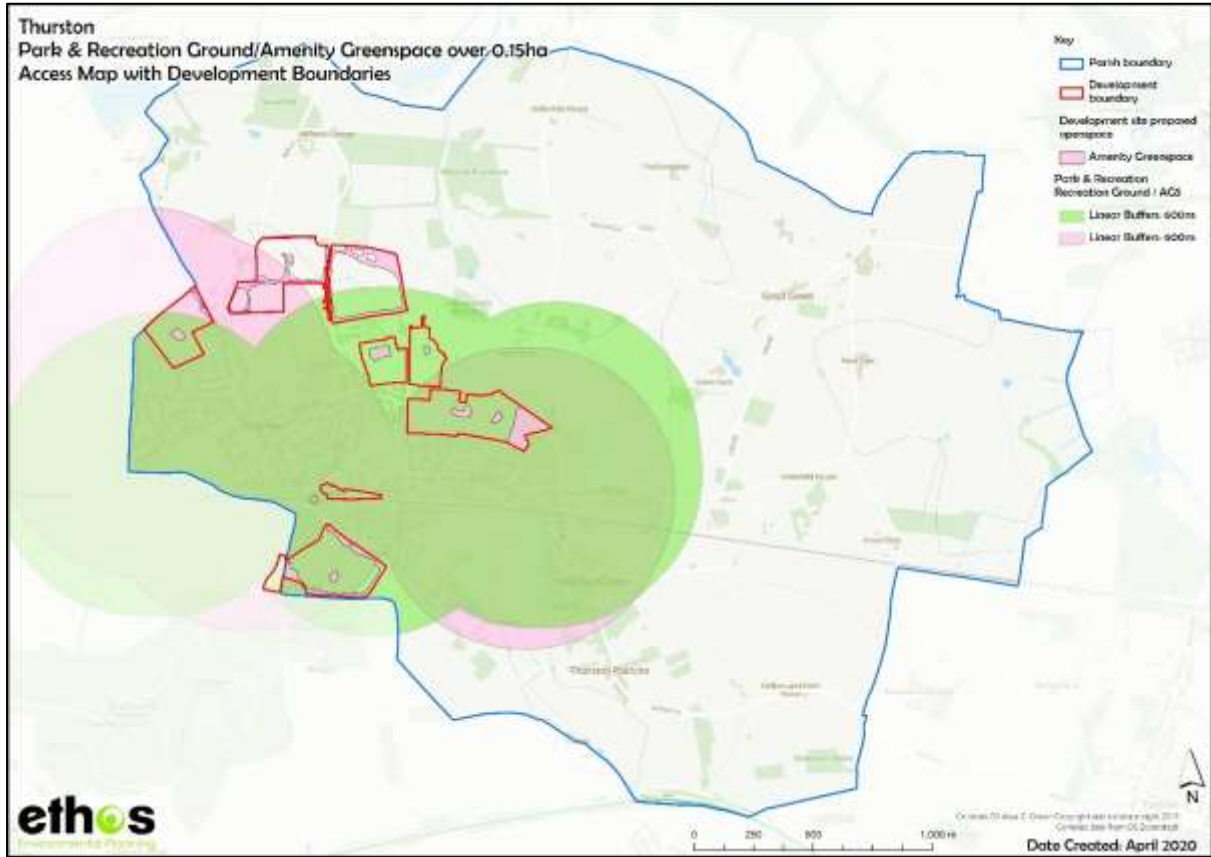


Figure 12 Access to children’s play space (12 minutes’ walk time)

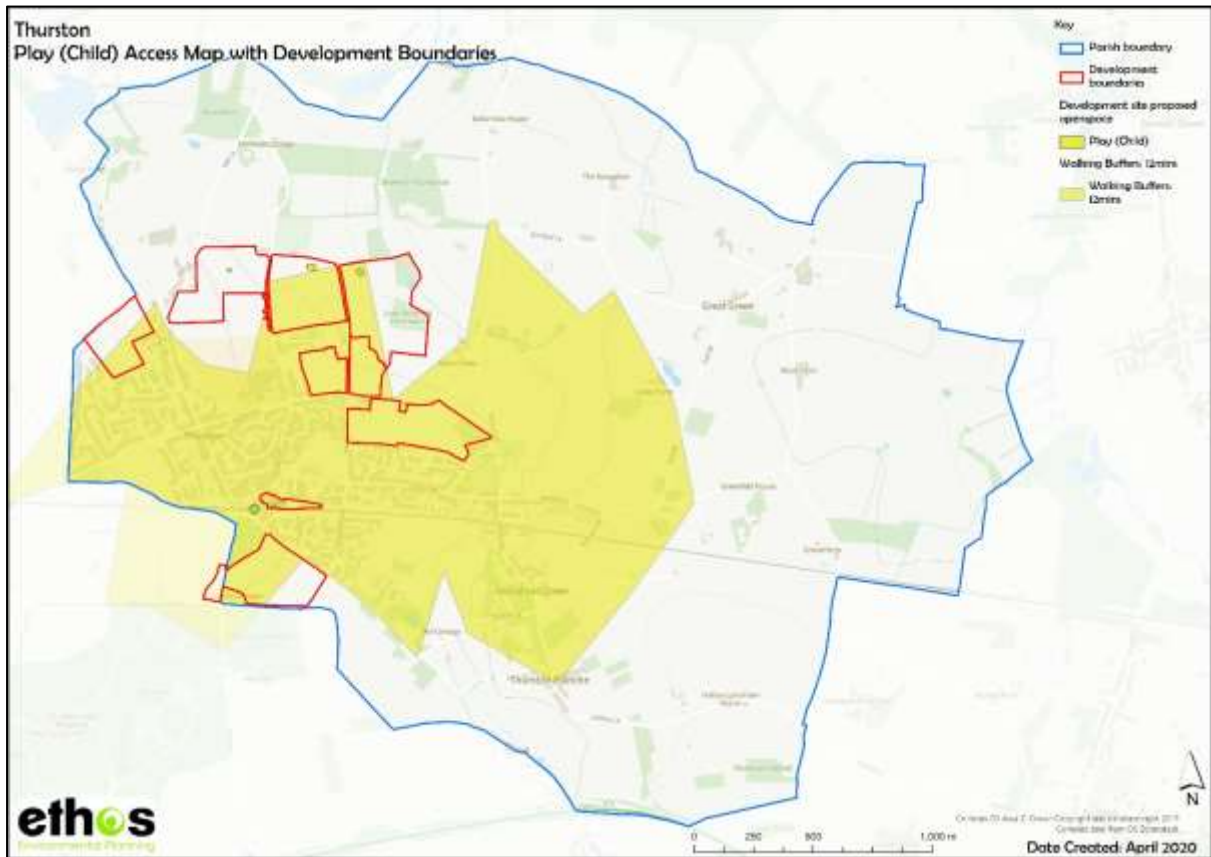


Figure 13 Access to youth play space (20 minutes' walk time)

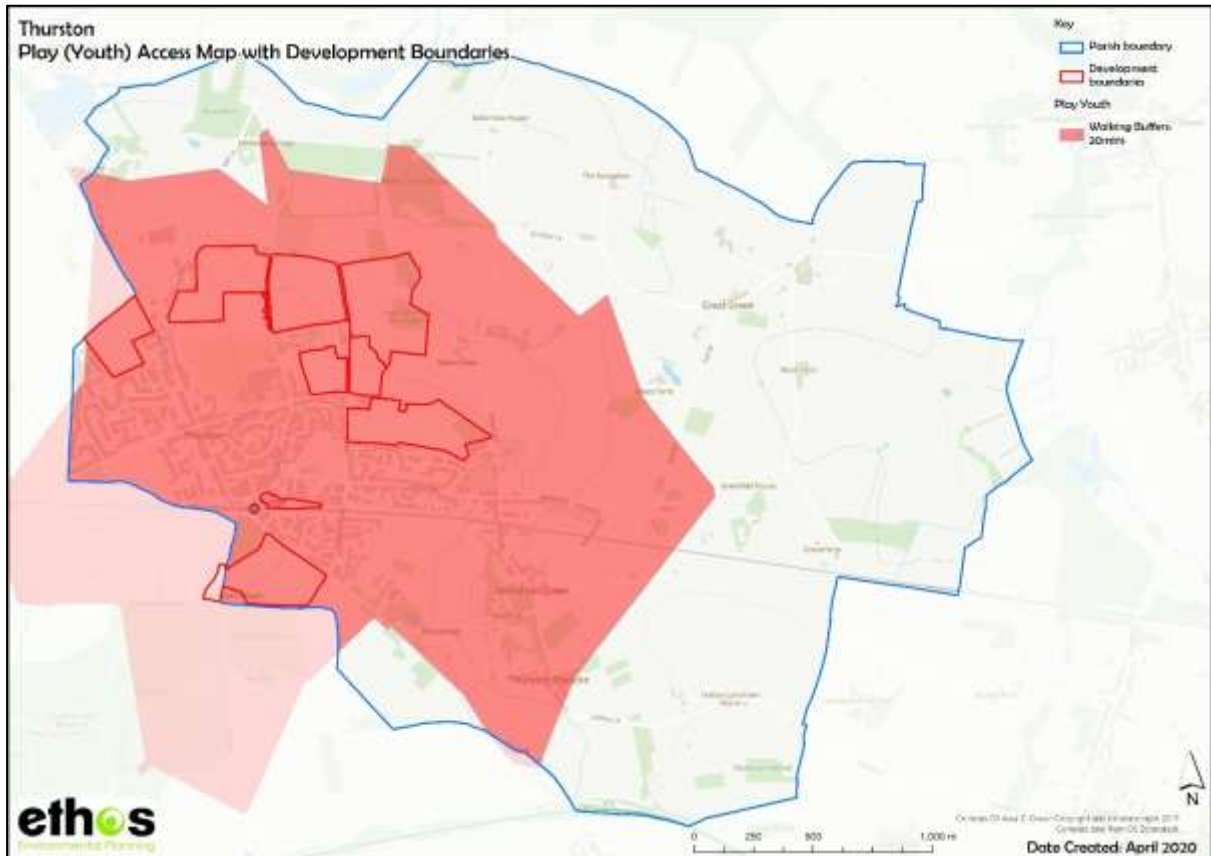
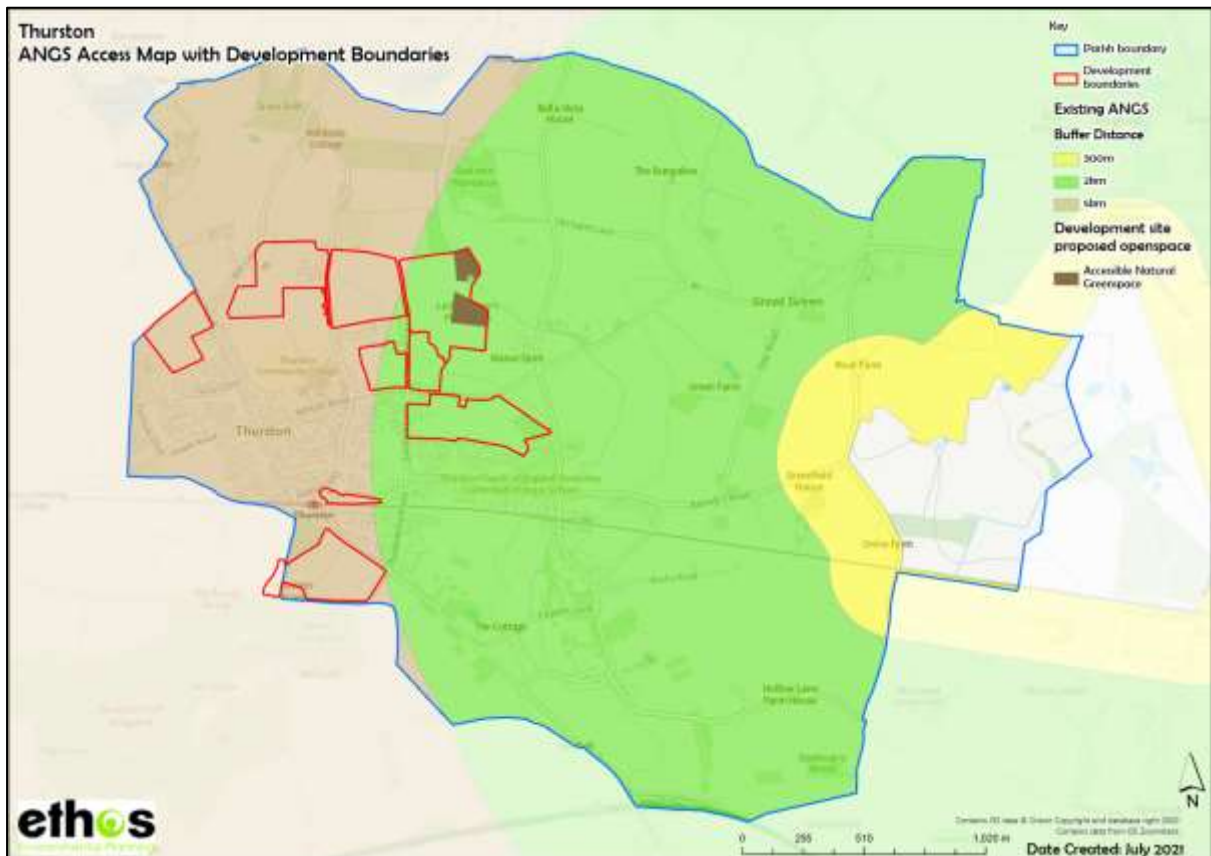


Figure 14 Access to accessible natural greenspace (ANGSt Standards)



7.4 Assessment by individual development/proposed development site

7.4.1 Overview

This section considers the impacts and open space requirements for each individual development against the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment standards.

It is informed by Section 8 (Strategic Options, Policy and Management Recommendations) of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment (2016-2036), including the guideline table for development thresholds requiring open space provision on site (see Table 9 below).

Table 9 Requirement for open space (from Section 8.7 of Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment)

Type of Provision	1-9 dwellings	10-19 dwellings	20-99 dwellings	100+ dwellings
Allotments	0	X	X	✓
Amenity/Natural Green Space	0	X	✓	✓
Parks and Recreation Grounds	0	X	X	✓
Play Space (children)	0	X	✓	✓
Play Space (Youth)	0	X	X	✓

KEY: ✓ on-site provision normally sought
 X improvements to existing (off-site) provision may be required, subject to Assessment of Need (AON) Study.
 0 No on-site or off-site provision/improvements required

For those developments that already have full planning permission, the amount of open space is already determined. However, it is useful to apply the new standards to these applications to help understand how decisions related to open space requirements could be applied to future or current applications.

This assessment considers the amount of open space set out within approved (or most recent) layout plans, and the requirements for open space against the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment standards. It also considers access to existing open spaces, and the quality of existing open space.

The efficacy of standards will depend heavily on the way that they are applied. Here are some important and interrelated principles:

- An inability to provide sufficient quantity of open space might be at least partly compensated for through better quality and access to open space. Investment in the

quality of open space can also improve the ‘carrying capacity¹³’ of open spaces and therefore offset some shortcomings in quantitative provision.

- New and improved open space should be designed and provided to benefit both people and the local/wider environment wherever possible e.g. by providing multi-functional open spaces that contribute to the Green Infrastructure network and maximise biodiversity. Wherever possible it should heighten residents’ overall appreciation, understanding of, and respect for that environment.
- The open space standards will need to be applied to a variety of scenarios, and flexibility of interpretation is the key to success. A pragmatic approach will be essential given the range of circumstances in which they will be used.
- The open space standards that have been set are for **minimum levels of provision**. So, just because geographical areas may enjoy levels of provision exceeding minimum standards, this does not necessarily mean there is a surplus of provision, as other factors may need to be taken into account e.g. nature conservation or historic value. It is also important to note that the quantity, accessibility and quality standards need to be considered together – they should not be considered in isolation. For example, even if there may be sufficient supply of a particular open space typology against the quantity standard, there may still be gaps in access, or the existing provision may be poor quality/not fit for purpose – and therefore there would still be shortfalls against the standards.

The following sections set out the application of standards to each development site.

7.4.2 Land at Norton Road (ref. 5070/16)

Layout plans

The site is split into two phases. Phase 1 (87 dwellings) has commenced on site. Phase 2 (104 dwellings) has been submitted for reserved matters. It is understood that the total number of dwellings for this site will reach 200, although later phases of the development have not yet been submitted. The open space set out within the development layout plans were mapped into GIS as shown in the figures below.

¹³ Improvements in the quality of open spaces can improve the capacity of that open space to accommodate more people.

Figure 15 Land at Norton Road (ref. 5070/16) - Phase 1 open space



Figure 16 Land at Norton Road - Phase 2 open space



Open space being delivered/proposed and open space requirements against the standards

Table 10 below shows the quantity of open space being delivered as part of the development (calculated from the GIS mapping in figure 16 above (the open space being delivered as part of phase 1 is only 0.07ha in size, and is therefore not included in the quantity of amenity green space).

It also shows the requirements for open space against the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment quantity standards. The open space requirements have been calculated using a predicted population increase of 460 persons (resulting from a total of 200 dwellings).

The final three columns show how the open space provision (or lack of) will impact the existing supply of open space by typology (this is then considered for all the development sites combined in Section 7.5 below).

Table 10 Open space provision and open space requirements for Land at Norton Road (ref. 5070/16) i.e. a population increase of 460 persons

Typology	Provision within the development (ha)	Requirements against the open space quantity standards (ha)	Impact on existing open space supply (ha)	Existing Parish Supply (ha)	Resulting Supply (ha)
Allotments	0	0.14	-0.14	-0.27	-0.41
Amenity green space	1.19	0.46	+0.73	-2.12	-1.39
Parks and Recreation Grounds	0	0.46	-0.46	1.65	1.19
Play space (child)	0.06	0.03	+0.03	-0.12	-0.09
Play space (youth)	0	0.02	-0.02	-0.12	-0.14
Accessible natural green space	2.49	(combined with amenity green space)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	3.74	1.11			

Consideration of access to existing open space

Against the access standards (see Figures 10 to 14), the following is noted:

- The parish meets the access standard for allotments, however the nearest allotment is over 15 minutes' walk away.
- There is no access to existing amenity green space.
- There is partial access to parks and recreation grounds in the southern half of the development site only.

- There is partial access to children’s play space along the western half of the development site only.
- There is good access to youth play space.
- There is good access to accessible natural green space against the 2km and 5km ANGSt Standards, but no access to local accessible natural greenspace within 300m.

Conclusions

The size of the development would normally require that all typologies of open space be provided on site. However, taking account of the access to existing open space, the quantity and types of open spaces being provided on site are generally considered sufficient, particularly as the overall quantity of open space exceeds the minimum requirement. The retention/provision of woodland is welcomed. However, the on-site provision of an allotment or community food growing area would have been a reasonable requirement, considering the existing supply (although demand/waiting list for allotment plots was not assessed) and access to existing allotments.

As the existing supply of parks and recreation grounds is good, and there is partial access to parks within the development, and also considering that the overall quantity of open space exceeds the minimum requirements, it would be reasonable to request developer contributions to improve the quality of existing provision.

Similarly, as there is good access to youth play space, but taking into account the shortfalls in supply and need to improve the youth facilities within the parish, it would be expected that developer contributions be used to improve and expand the youth provision at New Green Open Space Area (the largest and most central park within the parish, which is also in close proximity to this development).

7.4.2 Land West of Ixworth Road (ref. 4963/16)

Layout plans

This development comprising 248 dwellings and associated open space has full planning permission and has commenced on site. The open space set out within the development layout plans were mapped into GIS as shown in the figure below.

Figure 17 Land West of Ixworth Road



Open space being delivered/proposed and open space requirements against the standards

Table 11 below shows the quantity of open space being delivered as part of the development (calculated from the GIS mapping in figure 17 above).

It also shows the requirements for open space against the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment quantity standards. The open space requirements have been calculated using a predicted population increase of 570 persons (resulting from a total of 248 dwellings).

The final three columns show how the open space provision (or lack of) will impact the existing supply of open space by typology (this is considered for all the development sites combined in Section 7.5 below).

Table 11 Open space provision and open space requirements for Land West of Ixworth Road (ref. 4963/16) i.e. a population increase of 570 persons

Typology	Provision within the development (ha)	Requirements against the open space quantity standards (ha)	Impact on existing open space supply (ha)	Existing Parish Supply (ha)	Resulting Supply (ha)
Allotments	0	0.17	-0.17	-0.27	-0.44
Amenity green space	1.30	0.57	+0.73	-2.12	-1.39
Parks and Recreation Grounds	0.01 (outdoor sports fixed)	0.57	-0.56	1.65	1.09
Play space (child)	0.03	0.03	0.00	-0.12	-0.12
Play space (youth)	0	0.02	-0.02	-0.12	-0.14
Accessible natural green space	0	(combined with amenity green space)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	1.34	1.39			

Consideration of access to existing open space

Against the access standards (see Figures 10 to 14), the following is noted:

- The parish meets the access standard for allotments, however the nearest allotment is over 15 minutes' walk away.
- There is no access to existing amenity green space.
- There is no access to parks and recreation grounds.
- There is no access to children's play space.
- There is good access to youth play space.
- There is access to accessible natural green space against the 5km ANGSt Standard only, with a large gap in access against the 2km Standard and 300m Standard.

Conclusions

The development will provide sufficient amenity green space/natural green space (with appropriate management) and children's play space against the standards. As provision includes an outdoor sports fixed facility, as well as a children's play space, it could be argued that a proportion of this amenity green space area could actually be categorised as a small park. Therefore, it is considered that the overall quantity of amenity green space/natural green space (or park area- depending on how it is categorised), is sufficient against the standards. However, for a development of this size, an allotment or community food growing area should ideally be provided, considering the existing access to and supply of allotments.

As there is good access to youth play space, it would be expected that developer contributions are secured to improve the quality/play value of nearby youth play space (as well as allotments as these are not being provided on site), whilst noting that the lack of provision of these types of open space on site will have impacts on the exiting supply of open space.

7.4.3 Land South of Norton Road (ref. 2797/16)

Layout plans

This development comprising 175 dwellings and associated open space has full planning permission and has commenced on site. The open space set out within the development layout plans were mapped into GIS as shown in the figure below.

Figure 18 Land South of Norton Road



Open space being delivered/proposed and open space requirements against the standards

Table 12 below shows the quantity of open space being delivered as part of the development (calculated from the GIS mapping in figure 18 above).

It also shows the requirements for open space against the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment quantity standards. The open space requirements have been calculated using a predicted population increase of 403 persons (resulting from a total of 175 dwellings).

The final three columns show how the open space provision (or lack of) will impact the existing supply of open space by typology (this is considered for all the development sites combined in Section 7.5 below).

Table 12 Open space provision and open space requirements for Land South of Norton Road (ref. 2797/16) i.e. a population increase of 403 persons

Typology	Provision within the development (ha)	Requirements against the open space quantity standards (ha)	Impact on existing open space supply (ha)	Existing Parish Supply (ha)	Resulting Supply (ha)
Allotments	0.20	0.12	+0.08	-0.27	-0.19
Amenity green space	1.97	0.40	+1.57	-2.12	-0.55
Parks and Recreation Grounds	0	0.40	-0.40	1.65	1.25
Play space (child)	0	0.02	-0.02	-0.12	-0.14
Play space (youth)	0	0.02	-0.02	-0.12	-0.14
Accessible natural green space	0	(combined with amenity green space)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	1.97	0.96			

Consideration of access to existing open space

Against the access standards (see Figures 10 to 14), the following is noted:

- The parish meets the access standard for allotments, and the nearest allotment is within 15 minutes' walk time.
- Good access to existing amenity green space.
- Good access to parks and recreation grounds.
- Good access to children's play space.
- Good access to youth play space.
- There is good access to accessible natural green space against the 2km and 5km ANGSt Standards, but no access to local accessible natural greenspace within 300m.

Conclusions

It is considered that the type and quantity of provision is sufficient, particularly as the overall quantity of open space exceeds the minimum requirement and there is good existing access to parks and recreation grounds, children's play space and youth play space.

Developer contributions should be used to fund improvements to nearby parks and play (children and youth) facilities, whilst noting that the lack of provision of these types of open space on site will have impacts on the exiting supply of these facilities – therefore existing children’s and youth spaces should be extended/improved to avoid worsening the shortfalls in supply.

7.4.4 Land at Meadow Lane (ref. 4942/16)

Layout plans

This development comprising 64 dwellings and associated open space has full planning permission. The open space set out within the development layout plans were mapped into GIS as shown in the figure below.

Figure 19 Land at Meadow Lane



Open space being delivered/proposed and open space requirements against the standards

Table 13 below shows the quantity of open space being delivered as part of the development (calculated from the GIS mapping in figure 19 above.)

It also shows the requirements for open space against the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment quantity standards. The open space requirements have been calculated using a predicted population increase of 147 persons (resulting from a total of 64 dwellings).

The final three columns show how the open space provision (or lack of) will impact the existing supply of open space by typology (this is considered for all the development sites combined in Section 7.5 below).

Table 13 Open space provision and open space requirements for Land at Meadow Lane (ref. 4942/16) i.e. a population increase of 147 persons

Typology	Provision within the development (ha)	Requirements against the open space quantity standards (ha)	Impact on existing open space supply (ha)	Existing Parish Supply (ha)	Resulting Supply (ha)
Allotments	0	N/A	N/A	-0.27	-0.27
Amenity green space	0.39	0.15	+0.24	-2.12	-1.88
Parks and Recreation Grounds	0	N/A	N/A	1.65	1.65
Play space (child)	0	0.01	-0.01	-0.12	-0.13
Play space (youth)	0	N/A	N/A	-0.12	-0.12
Accessible natural green space	0	(combined with amenity green space)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	0.39	0.16			

Consideration of access to existing open space

Against the access standards (see Figures 10 to 14), the following is noted:

- The parish meets the access standard for allotments, however the nearest allotment is over 15 minutes' walk away.
- No access to existing amenity green space.
- Good access to parks and recreation grounds.
- Good access to children's play space.
- Good access to youth play space.
- There is access to accessible natural green space against the 2km and 5km ANGSt Standards, but no access to local accessible natural greenspace within 300m.

Conclusions

Considering the size of this development, the requirements for on-site provision would be for amenity green space and a small children's play space. However, taking into account the good access to existing children's play space, the quantity and type of open space being

proposed/provided as part of this development is considered sufficient, particularly as the overall quantity of open space exceeds the minimum requirement.

Developer contributions should be sought to improve existing nearby children’s play space.

7.4.5 Land West of Barton Road (ref. 02232/17)

Layout plans

This development comprising 129 dwellings and associated open space has full planning permission. The open space set out within the development layout plans were mapped into GIS as shown in the figure below.

Figure 20 Land West of Barton Road



Open space being delivered/proposed and open space requirements against the standards

Table 14 below shows the quantity of open space being delivered as part of the development (calculated from the GIS mapping in figures 20 above).

It also shows the requirements for open space against the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment quantity standards. The open space requirements have been calculated using a predicted population increase of 297 persons (resulting from a total of 129 dwellings).

The final three columns show how the open space provision (or lack of) will impact the existing supply of open space by typology (this is considered for all the development sites combined in Section 7.5 below).

Table 14 Open space provision and open space requirements for Land West of Barton Road (ref. 02232/17) i.e. a population increase of 297 persons

Typology	Provision within the development (ha)	Requirements against the open space quantity standards (ha)	Impact on existing open space supply (ha)	Existing Parish Supply (ha)	Resulting Supply (ha)
Allotments	0	0.09	-0.09	-0.27	-0.36
Amenity green space	0.45	0.30	+0.15	-2.12	-1.97
Parks and Recreation Grounds	0	0.30	-0.30	1.65	1.35
Play space (child)	0	0.02	-0.02	-0.12	-0.14
Play space (youth)	0	0.01	-0.01	-0.12	-0.13
Accessible natural green space	0	(combined with amenity green space)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	0.45	0.72			

Consideration of access to existing open space

Against the access standards (see Figures 10 to 14), the following is noted:

- The parish meets the access standard for allotments, however the nearest allotment is over 15 minutes' walk away.
- Good access to existing amenity green space.
- Reasonable access to parks and recreation grounds (covering just over half of the site).
- Partial access to children's play space (in the southern part of the site only).
- Good access to existing youth play space.
- There is access to accessible natural green space against the 5km ANGSt Standard only, with a large gap in access against the 2km Standard and 300m Standard.

Conclusions

Due to the size of the development and gaps in access to children's play space and also considering the existing allotment provision and location within the parish, it is considered that a children's play space and allotment or community food growing area would ideally have been provided on site. The quantity of amenity green space is sufficient; however, the overall quantity of open space being provided falls short of the quantity standard by 0.27ha.

As there is access to children’s play space and parks and recreation grounds across part of the development site, developer contributions to fund nearby existing provision could be justified. Due to the good access to youth play space the priority would also be to improve the quality/play value of existing youth spaces.

7.4.6 Beyton Road (ref. 3486/19)

Layout plans

This development comprising 210 dwellings and associated open space has outline planning permission. The open space set out within the development layout plans were mapped into GIS as shown in the figure below.

Figure 21 Land South of Beyton Road



Open space being delivered/proposed and open space requirements against the standards

Table 15 below shows the quantity of open space being delivered as part of the development (calculated from the GIS mapping in figure 21 above).

It also shows the requirements for open space against the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment quantity standards. The open space requirements have been calculated using a predicted population increase of 483 persons (resulting from a total of 210 dwellings).

The final three columns show how the open space provision (or lack of) will impact the existing supply of open space by typology (this is considered for all the development sites combined in Section 7.5 below).

Table 15 Open space provision and open space requirements for Land at Beyton Road (ref. 3486/19) i.e. a population increase of 483 persons

Typology	Provision within the development (ha)	Requirements against the open space quantity standards (ha)	Impact on existing open space supply (ha)	Existing Parish Supply (ha)	Resulting Supply (ha)
Allotments	0	0.14	-0.14	-0.27	-0.41
Amenity green space	1.58	0.48	+1.10	-2.12	-1.02
Parks and Recreation Grounds	0	0.48	-0.48	1.65	1.17
Play space (child)	0	0.03	-0.03	-0.12	-0.15
Play space (youth)	0	0.02	-0.02	-0.12	-0.14
Accessible natural green space	0	(combined with amenity green space)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	1.58	1.15			

Consideration of access to existing open space

Against the access standards (see Figures 10 to 14), the following is noted:

- The parish meets the access standard for allotments, however the nearest allotment is over 15 minutes' walk away.
- Good access to existing amenity green space.
- Good access to parks and recreation grounds.
- Partial access to children's play space.
- Good access to existing youth play space.
- There is access to accessible natural green space against the 5km ANGSt Standard only, with a large gap in access against the 2km Standard and 300m Standard.

Conclusions

Due to the size of the development and gaps in access to children's play space and also considering the existing allotment provision and location within the parish, it is considered that a children's play space and allotment or community food growing area would ideally be provided on site. However, the quantity of amenity green space/natural green space

proposed is sufficient, and overall the total amount of open space being provided is sufficient, as it exceeds the minimum overall requirement for open space.

As there is partial access to children’s play space, developer contributions to fund nearby existing provision is also a reasonable option. Due to the good access to parks and recreation grounds and youth play space the priority would also be to improve the quality/play value of nearby open spaces using developer contributions.

7.4.7 Ixworth Road (ref. DC/19/02090)

Layout plan

This development proposal comprising 210 dwellings and associated open space has been submitted for planning permission. No decision has been made (as of March 2020). The open space set out within the development layout plans were mapped into GIS as shown in the figure below.

Figure 22 Land East of Ixworth Road



Open space being delivered/proposed and open space requirements against the standards

Table 16 below shows the quantity of open space being delivered as part of the development (calculated from the GIS mapping in figure 22 above).

It also shows the requirements for open space against the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment quantity standards. The open space requirements have been calculated using a predicted population increase of 483 persons (resulting from a total of 210 dwellings).

The final three columns show how the open space provision (or lack of) will impact the existing supply of open space by typology (this is considered for all the development sites combined in Section 7.5 below).

Table 16 Open space provision and open space requirements for Land at Ixworth Road (ref. DC/19/02090) i.e. a population increase of 483 persons

Typology	Provision within the development (ha)	Requirements against the open space quantity standards (ha)	Impact on existing open space supply (ha)	Existing Parish Supply (ha)	Resulting Supply (ha)
Allotments	0.11	0.14	-0.03	-0.27	-0.30
Amenity green space	2.25	0.48	+1.77	-2.12	-0.35
Parks and Recreation Grounds	0	0.48	-0.48	1.65	1.17
Play space (child)	0.10	0.03	+0.07	-0.12	-0.05
Play space (youth)	0	0.02	-0.02	-0.12	-0.14
Accessible natural green space	0	(combined with amenity green space)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	2.46	1.15			

Consideration of access to existing open space

Against the access standards (see Figures 10 to 14), the following is noted:

- The parish meets the access standard for allotments, however the nearest allotment is over 15 minutes' walk away.
- No access to existing amenity green space.
- Partial access to parks and recreation grounds.
- Partial access to children's play space.
- Good access to existing youth play space.
- There is access to accessible natural green space against the 5km ANGSt Standard only, with a large gap in access against the 2km Standard and 300m Standard.

Conclusions

Considering the size of the development and access to existing open space, it is considered that the proposed amenity green space and children's play space is sufficient, particularly as they exceed the minimum requirements. The proposed community food growing area is welcomed, however, the area should be increased to bring it in line with the minimum requirement (0.14ha). The overall quantity of open space proposed is sufficient.

Due to the good access to youth play space and partial access to parks and recreation grounds the priority would be to improve the quality/play value of nearby spaces using developer contributions.

7.4.8 Granary Site, Station Hill

This high-density development comprising 97 apartments has outline planning permission. No open space is proposed.

The open space requirements against the Babergh and Mid Suffolk open space quantity standards for a development of 97 dwellings, (and a resulting population increase of 223 people) are as follows:

- Allotments: not required on site
- Amenity green space/natural green space: 0.22ha
- Parks and recreation grounds: not required on site
- Play (Child): 0.01ha
- Play (youth): not required on site

Total: 0.23ha

As no open space is being proposed, the total shortfall would be 0.23ha (0.22 for amenity green space and 0.01 for children's play space).

7.5 Open space impacts and requirements from combined development

This section considers the impacts on existing open space provision and open space requirements from the total predicted population increase from all new/proposed development. The total number of dwellings from the individual development sites considered in Section 7.4 is 1,333, which will result in a predicted population increase of 3066 people (using an average household size of 2.3 persons).

This section covers:

- The impact on the existing supply of open space, if no new open space were provided as part of new development.
-

- The overall requirements for open space provision resulting from all development set out in Table 8 (a predicted population increase of 3066 people), against the quantity standards.
- The impact on the existing supply of open space, considering the open space quantities set out within approved/proposed development layout plans.

7.5.1 Impact of population growth on existing open space supply if no new open space provided as part of developments

Table 17 shows the impact on the current supply of open space in the parish if no new open space were provided on site as part of new housing developments. This has been calculated using the requirements for open space in Table 18.

Table 17 *Impact on existing open space supply from combined development, if no new open space provided*

Typology	Existing Supply (Ha)	Resulting Supply (Ha) from combined development, if no open space provided.
Allotments	-0.27	-1.08
Amenity Green Space	-2.12	-5.19
Parks and Recreation Grounds	1.65	-1.05
Play Space (Child)	-0.12	-0.30
Play Space (Youth)	-0.12	-0.23

As can be seen from Table 17, the existing shortfalls in allotments, amenity green space, children's play space and youth play space would be exacerbated, and park and recreation grounds would also be in shortfall. Therefore, on-site provision of all types of open space as part of new development is a priority, whilst also considering the quality of and access to existing open spaces.

Table 18 Open space requirements for all new/proposed development against the standards

Typology	Standard/requirement for new provision (Ha/1000)	Requirement from combined development (ha)*
Allotments	0.3	0.81
Amenity Green Space and Natural Green Space combined	1.0	3.07
Parks and Recreation Grounds	1.0	2.70
Play Space (Children)	0.06	0.18
Play Space (Youth)	0.04	0.11

*This has been calculated by adding the requirements from each development site, and takes account of the threshold for on-site provision for allotments, parks and recreation grounds and youth play space i.e. these typologies are not usually required on sites with less than 100 dwellings. This results in a population increase of 3066 (resulting from all development sites) that has been applied to amenity green space/natural green space and children's play space, and a population increase of 2696 (all development sites excluding those two with less than 100 dwellings) that has been applied to allotments, parks and recreation grounds and youth play space.

7.5.2 Impact of combined development on existing supply, taking account of the open space set out in approved and proposed layout plans

Table 19 below shows the resulting supply of open space following consideration of the combined quantities of open space typologies set out within approved or proposed layout plans for each development site considered in Section 7.4. This assumes that all open space will be provided in accordance with the layout plans summarised in Section 7.4 above.

Table 19 Open space supply taking account of new/proposed open space from developments set out in Section 7.4

Typology	Existing Quantity in Parish (ha)	Existing requirement in Parish (ha)	Existing Supply in Parish (ha)	Proposed Provision from new development (combined) (ha)	Required provision from new development (combined) (ha)	Impact on existing supply from new development (combined) (ha)	Resulting Supply (ha)
Allotments	0.73	1.00	-0.27	0.31	0.81	-0.50	-0.77
Amenity Green Space (>0.15 ha)	1.21	3.33	-2.12	9.13	3.07	+6.06	+3.94
Parks and Recreation Grounds	4.98	3.33	1.65	0	2.70	-2.70	-1.05

Play (Child)	0.08	0.20	-0.12	0.19	0.18	+0.01	-0.11
Play Youth	0.01	0.13	-0.12	0	0.11	-0.11	-0.23

Considering the number of large development sites in close proximity (the majority of which have full planning permission), it seems that an opportunity has been missed in terms of the strategic planning of open space across the Parish. Although it is positive that the overall quantity of open space being proposed as part of new development exceeds the minimum requirements for overall open space provision, the majority of this provision is amenity green space, and in some cases it may have served better to incorporate other types of space as discussed in Section 7.4 above. For example, open space provision including green infrastructure and the access network could have been considered holistically across the developments along the northern arc of the settlement, linking down towards the New Green Open Space.

However, the good provision of amenity green space is likely to provide flexibility and options for open space provision in the future if needed, for example upgrading areas into parks by accommodating additional facilities, accommodating food growing areas, or improving habitats for biodiversity or climate change adaptation.

As can be seen from Table 19 above, the existing shortfall in allotments would be exacerbated. Ixworth Road and land South of Norton Road will be providing new allotments which will improve access to food growing space in the western part of the parish where there is currently none. Land at Norton Road is also proposing space for community food growing (area not known). It is recommended that a detailed assessment of allotment demand is undertaken (considering waiting lists and vacant plots), to ascertain the need for additional provision over and above this, but the resulting good provision of amenity green space against the standards may provide opportunity to reduce this shortfall in the future, if the need were identified.

All the new/proposed developments provide amenity green space on site (with the exception of the Granary Site, Station Hill), which also exceed the minimum quantity standards set by the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment (2016-2036). This would result in amenity green space going from a shortfall in supply, to sufficient supply.

The supply of parks and recreation grounds would go into shortfall, as none of the developments appear to be setting out parks and recreation grounds. However, this should be taken with caution as it could be argued for some sites e.g. Land West of Ixworth Road (ref. 4963/16), which is providing both fixed equipment and a children's play space, that this area is a small park and recreation ground rather than amenity green space. The final layouts and maintenance regimes for public open space set out within development plans could mean that the provision is categorised as a park and recreation ground (or even accessible natural green space) rather than amenity green space. Therefore, parks and recreation grounds should be viewed alongside amenity green space, and although the provision of parks may go

into a shortfall in supply, the good supply of amenity green space against the standard would likely mitigate this.

Although provision of children's play space from new development would be sufficient overall, the resulting supply within the parish would still be in shortfall. Therefore, opportunities to improve and extend existing children's play provision should be sought (as identified in Section 7.4).

None of the new/proposed developments appear to provide new youth provision. This would result in youth play space going into further shortfall. Consideration should be given to developments that have not already been approved to including new youth provision, or alternatively developer contributions should be used to improve and expand existing provision. New Green Open Space Area is currently the largest park and is central within the parish, and is therefore likely to have the most potential to accommodate new provision in accordance with the needs/aspirations identified within the PIIP.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Introduction

This section sets out recommendations for open space within the Parish. It draws on all the previous steps of this Strategy, and the policy recommendations within Section 8 of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open Space Assessment (2016-2036) to bring together informed recommendations and addresses the following requirements of the study brief:

- Existing open space provision to be protected;
- Existing open space provision to be enhanced;
- Opportunities for re-location/re-designation of open space;
- Identification of areas for new open space provision; and

8.2 Existing open space provision to be protected

The quantity analysis summarised in Table 4 (Section 6) shows that there are existing shortfalls in the supply of every typology of open space with the exception of parks and recreation grounds. Parks and recreation grounds cannot be considered as surplus to requirements as they are providing accessible open space in the context of a large shortfall in amenity green space (as well as other typologies).

In addition, when considering the impacts on supply from new/proposed development (Table 17, Section 7.5), the supply of parks and recreation grounds is likely to go into shortfall, and all other typologies would remain in shortfall with the exception of amenity green space. Amenity green space should not be considered as being surplus to requirement as it could help reduce the shortfalls in other open space typologies, and in addition the amount of open space actually provided as part of developments that have not already been approved may change.

There may also be other factors such as a sites nature conservation, historic or cultural value, or its contribution to the Green Infrastructure network which mean it should be protected.

Therefore, it is recommended that all existing open space should be afforded protection.

The importance of amenity green space less than 0.15ha in size is also recognised.

8.3 Existing provision to be enhanced

The quality audit (summarised in Section 6.4, Table 6) assessed the majority of open spaces as being of good quality, however three were assessed as being of average quality and are therefore priorities for improvement:

- Heath Road Recreational Area
- School Road Amenity Green Space
- Hambros Open Space

In addition, youth play spaces (both basketball hoops with a kick wall) within Health Road Park and New Green Open Space Area were assessed as having potential to improve e.g. upgrading to a full MUGA. It is considered that New Green Open Space area has the biggest potential to improve youth provision, due to its size and central location. Therefore, this park and recreation ground may have potential to accommodate some of the needs/aspirations set out within the PIIP, such as a skate/bmx area and community football pitch.

Although the remaining open spaces were assessed as being of good quality, there are nevertheless recommendations made for improvements to these. These are purely based on an objective assessment against the quality criteria and provide a snap-shot in time. Any local aspirations and community consultation would need to be considered before any decisions were made.

A general observation from the site visits was that dogs were not allowed within the parks and recreation grounds, and therefore new provision of open space (as part of new development) should provide areas where people are free to walk their dogs and allow them to run off the lead. Alternatively, consideration could be given to allowing access within existing parks. Indeed, provision of a dog park is noted within the PIIP as a need.

The design and management of open space should provide wildlife habitat and maximise opportunities for biodiversity, in accordance with the NPPF. Biodiversity Net Gain is a requirement within the NPPF and is soon to be mandated through the Environment Bill, so this will be a requirement for all new development.

8.4 Opportunities for re-location/re-designation of open space

In some areas it may be possible to make better use of land by relocating an open space or sport and recreation facility, especially if this will enhance its quality or accessibility for existing users or use land which is not suitable for another purpose.

Although there are existing shortfalls in the supply of all typologies of open space, with the exception of parks and recreation grounds, there is good existing access to all typologies (see Section 6.3). Existing parks and recreation grounds have potential to accommodate new or improved youth play space and children's play space, or even food growing areas to reduce the shortfalls in supply of these typologies. In addition, existing amenity green spaces and parks could be managed to enhance their wildlife value/biodiversity and to improve access to local natural green space.

8.5 Identification of areas for new provision

There various opportunities for delivering new facilities - through new development (developer contributions (CIL and S106)) and to a lesser extent through capital and grant funding.

New provision will be required where there is a new development and a planned increase in population, and/or an existing deficiency in supply or access to facilities exists. This is covered in detail in Section 7.4 and 7.5.

A planning application is imminent for a new extra care facility on Heath Road (near Heath Road Recreational Area) to provide affordable housing for older people who want to live independently and require an element of care. The scheme has been designed around a series of courtyard gardens in order to provide green space for the residents and to break up the mass of the building.

The remainder of the field on Heath Road is owned by the Thurston Relief in New Charity which aims to support the needy of the parish and the Charity has confirmed that the land will not be used for speculative development. The size of the land for the scheme is 3.4 acres of the field which is approximately 10 acres. There are plans for this to be used as open space, healing wood and recreational area.
