Amenity Green Space

Spaces designed to soften the urban fabric, provide a setting for buildings, provide small wildlife habitats and allow for informal leisure activities.
What is amenity green space?

Amenity green space describes green space that is designed to soften the urban fabric, provide a setting for buildings, provide small wildlife habitats and allows for informal leisure activities. They are public open spaces whose primary purpose is to improve and enhance the appearance of the local environment and improve the well-being of local residents.

Amenity green space benefits the local community by improving public health, reducing stress levels, improving child development though creative play, increasing people’s interaction with nature and their perception of where they live and contributing towards economic prosperity. Landscaping is an integral part of new developments and the function of amenity space(s) should be well considered to maximise the benefit to the community.

In residential areas there is often overlap in the location, character and function of communal amenity space and casual play areas for children. These are often relatively small parcels of green space with few, if any, ancillary facilities that are closely related to homes and have benefits for local residents, whether for play or general amenity.

Amenity green spaces that are for general amenity and have no ancillary facilities such as seating or defining landscape features designed for play or leisure are referred to as ‘passive amenity green space’ for the purposes of this report. While they are important in the context of the townscape and act to improve the local area they do not encourage people to use the open space or facilitate leisure and recreational activities in these areas. The role of passive amenity green spaces is discussed in this report, however, as they provide limited value in terms of physical use by local residents they are not included in the open space analysis.
Recommended standards to provide adequate amenity green space

Open space standards provide a benchmark to assess if enough open space is provided and it is the most appropriate type of open space to meet the needs of the community.

The Fields In Trust is a national organisation that provides guidance about the provision of open space. They have set out a standard of provision of 2.4ha of open space per 1000 population. This standard is broken down to: 0.2-0.4ha of equipped play space, 0.6-0.4ha unequipped play space (amenity space) and 1.6ha of playing pitches.

This quantitative standard was echoed in the previous Open Space Needs Assessment (2006) which suggested 0.8ha of open space in the form of equipped and unequipped play areas be provided per 1000 people with the remaining 1.6ha in the form of playing pitches. For amenity green space the 2006 assessment recommended a quantitative standard of 0.6ha per 1000 people. In effect this means that 0.2ha of open space should be in the form of equipped play space and 0.6ha should be amenity green space. This standard was considered appropriate to reflect the realistic expectations of the local population. The assessment also suggested residents should have access to this type of space within 100m walking distance from home (one minute walk).

The need for amenity space relates to the type of development. A residential development with large gardens will have a lower need for amenity space compared to flatted developments or areas of sheltered housing where gardens are often not provided. However, where a housing area is likely to contain a significant number of children, amenity green space also functions as a space to play for many.

When residential development is proposed it is important to consider how amenity space will contribute towards the townscape and how they will be used by local residents. In areas where residential properties have gardens it is likely that small amenity spaces will have limited value in comparison to a larger green space that provides more of a focal point for the community and provides the opportunity for a wider variety of activities.
The need for amenity space is not limited to housing areas. The landscaping associated with many non-residential developments, such as business parks, should be included in the consideration of need. In these areas quality is as important as quantity. Such landscaping improves the setting of the employment areas and can be used by employees.

When delivering new open space as part of new development Waveney District Council applies a ‘minimum acceptable size standard’. This standard ensures that new open spaces are a minimum size of 0.1ha with no dimension being smaller than 15m (this is equivalent to about two tennis courts). This is the minimum size considered to be acceptable for children’s play and other informal activities.

In Waveney, green space where amenity is the primary function can have a variety of roles including: large and small green spaces adjacent to residential developments, village greens and ancillary spaces adjacent to equipped play areas. Often green spaces can have amenity as a secondary function such as parks, gardens and playing fields.

The Open Space Needs Assessment (2006) consulted the public to ascertain their views of amenity green space in the District. A summary of the key findings are set out in Figure 49.

*Figure 49: Summary of key points in 2006 consultation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 70% of people of people stated amenity green space was important to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 81% of people stated that small amenity green spaces contribute positively to local environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 40% of people thought there was adequate amenity green space provision while 33% of residents thought there was not enough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Highest satisfaction was in North Lowestoft and the lowest was in Beccles, Bungay and Halesworth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Younger people felt more strongly about the need for amenity space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 20% of people with children allow them to play in local green spaces.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 21% were positive about their local green space, 12% held negative views, while 30% provided no response suggesting these spaces were insufficiently prominent for some people to notice quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Quality was considered highest in Southwold &amp; Reydon (39% positive) but more mixed in North Lowestoft (29% positive, 16% negative).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Open Space with amenity as the primary use

The total amount of amenity green space where amenity is the primary function is 83.63 hectares. This is a little more than half of the total amount of open space in the District (160.75ha).

Table 25: Provision of green space with amenity as the primary use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub area</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Total open space (ha)</th>
<th>Amenity green space (ha)</th>
<th>Proportion of open space that has amenity as the primary use (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beccles</td>
<td>14,796</td>
<td>15.06</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>27.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bungay</td>
<td>5,127</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>78.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halesworth</td>
<td>4,726</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>34.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kessingland</td>
<td>4,327</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>64.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Lowestoft</td>
<td>36,089</td>
<td>59.53</td>
<td>39.62</td>
<td>66.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Lowestoft</td>
<td>34,362</td>
<td>45.29</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>40.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwold &amp; Reydon</td>
<td>3,680</td>
<td>8.63</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>56.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>12,147</td>
<td>19.13</td>
<td>8.81</td>
<td>46.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>District</strong></td>
<td><strong>115,254</strong></td>
<td><strong>160.75</strong></td>
<td><strong>83.63</strong></td>
<td><strong>52.02</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Population source: Census 2011*

Bungay, North Lowestoft and Kessingland have the highest proportion of open space where amenity is the primary use. This, however, masks a shortfall in provision, unequal distribution and the limited variety of amenity spaces in the market towns and villages in the District.

Beccles, Halesworth and South Lowestoft have the lowest amount of open space where amenity is the primary use. This is reflective of a greater number of open spaces that are multi-functional and can support a greater number of activities. In these areas amenity as a secondary use is more apparent.
Amount of green space per 1000 people where amenity is the primary use

The average amount of amenity green space per 1000 people in the District is 0.73ha (Table 25). With the exception of North Lowestoft which has several large open spaces located adjacent to the coast, the lowest amount of provision is generally located in the more deprived areas of the District (e.g. Harbour Ward in North Lowestoft).

Table 25: Amount of amenity green space provided per 1000 people

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub area</th>
<th>Area of amenity green space (ha)</th>
<th>Hectares of amenity green space per 1000 people (ha)</th>
<th>Persons per hectare of amenity green space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beccles</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>3,522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bungay</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>1,461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halesworth</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>2,748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kessingland</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>1,857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Lowestoft</td>
<td>39.62</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Lowestof</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>1,868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwold &amp; Reydon</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>8.81</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>1,379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>83.63</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>1,378</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The greatest amount of provision is in Southwold & Reydon and North Lowestoft. In these areas a significant proportion of the total area is contained within a small number of larger spaces. Quantitatively, while provision is high, proximity and accessibility to these is likely to be more restricted in comparison to other areas where there is less provision but a greater number of spaces.

Deficiencies of green space with amenity as the primary use

The Open Space Needs Assessment (2006) suggested a quantitative standard of provision of 0.6ha per 1000 people. While it is difficult to provide new open space within existing settlement boundaries given the developed nature of these areas, this standard sets a benchmark to ensure adequate open space is provided in the future for new development. It also highlights the importance of improving the quality, value and accessibility to open space where there is a quantitative shortfall.

Overall, there is adequate provision of open space in the District in terms of quantity. An additional 14.48ha of amenity open space is available to the public above the amount required to meet the standard (Table 26).
### Table 26: Provision of amenity green space relative to recommended standard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub area</th>
<th>Total area of amenity green space (ha)</th>
<th>Amenity green space provision (ha per 1000 people)</th>
<th>Amenity green space required to meet 0.6ha per 1000 people standard (ha)</th>
<th>Provision above/below 0.6ha per 1000 people standard (ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beccles</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>8.88</td>
<td>-4.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bungay</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halesworth</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>-1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kessingland</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Lowestoft</td>
<td>39.62</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>21.65</td>
<td>17.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Lowestoft</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>20.62</td>
<td>-2.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwold &amp; Reydon</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>8.81</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>7.29</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>83.63</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>69.15</td>
<td>14.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

North and South Lowestoft have the greatest amount of amenity green space provided compared to other areas in the District, however, they also have the largest populations. North Lowestoft has a total of 18 open spaces where amenity is the primary function and almost 18ha amenity green space above the amount required. South Lowestoft has 26 amenity spaces but has a deficit of 2.22ha of amenity green space (Figure 50).

*Figure 50: Amenity green space required to meet 0.6ha per 1000 people standard*
Beccles has the most significant deficit of amenity space in the District (-4.68ha) with deficits also present in Halesworth (-1.12ha) and Kessingland (-0.12ha). Overall, rural areas have adequate provision, however, many of these open spaces are expected to support multiple activities (e.g. play, sport pitches and non-pitches, amenity etc.). In rural areas, open space is often set out as a focal point in the settlement with additional activities associated with an adjacent village hall or other type of community facility.

Primary and secondary amenity space provided and how this compares to the required standard 0.6ha per 1000 people

Amenity green space by its nature facilitates a variety of uses. Table 2 sets out how much amenity green space (primary function) is located in each sub area. Figure 3 shows the shortfalls found in Beccles, Bungay, Kessingland and South Lowestoft. When considered in isolation these deficits are significant. However, many open spaces are multi-functional and have the capacity to support amenity use as a secondary function (e.g. parks). Figure 51 shows the proportion of amenity green space that has primary and secondary functions. When open space is considered in terms of its amenity use overall (i.e. both primary and secondary uses) there is adequate provision across the District (Figure 52).

*Figure 51: Proportion of amenity green space has a primary or secondary function*
North and South Lowestoft in particular have an abundance of open space available for amenity purposes. North Lowestoft has a disproportionately large surplus compared to other sub areas. This skews the overall provision of amenity green space to show that provision over the whole District although this does not reflect how accessible amenity green space is for residents.

In Beccles, Halesworth and Kessingland there are deficits of open space that have amenity as the primary use, however, when secondary amenity use is considered these deficits are alleviated. This flexibility reflects the importance of open spaces that have multiple uses and their value to the community. Bungay is the only area that does not have an increase in the amount of amenity green space when secondary use is taken into account.

Individual open spaces in settlements such as Bungay collectively meet the quantitative standard required, however, the low level of amenity as a secondary use indicates that characteristically they are one dimensional and provide limited scope for supporting a multitude of activities. In smaller settlements with limited open space provision this can be a particular concern if the facilities are not appropriately distributed.
Southwold & Reydon has amenity green space provided as a secondary function in a similar proportion to the District average. Combined with the total amount of primary amenity green space there the amount of provision is the highest in the District.

**Size of open spaces with amenity use**

The size of an open space is an important factor in the role it plays in the community. Larger open spaces tend to support a wider array of activities and are more likely to be a focal point in the community. Many of the large amenity green spaces in Waveney are in the form of parks with semi-natural commons and the beach also supporting amenity use.

Smaller amenity green spaces are important features to enhance the townscape and support informal activities. These spaces often have fewer ancillary facilities than large open spaces and provide less value for local residents. Figure 53 shows how amenity green spaces of different sizes are distributed across the District.

*Figure 53: Size of amenity green spaces*
South Lowestoft, Beccles and the rural areas of the District have the greatest variety of amenity green space in terms of size. Approximately half of the amenity spaces in South Lowestoft are larger than one hectare with a majority having amenity as a secondary function. In contrast, North Lowestoft has significantly more amenity green space in terms of total area (39.62ha) than any other sub area and two thirds of these are larger than 1 hectare. Amenity spaces that have less character, either individually or collectively, can create a townscape the provides less value to the community overall regardless of their size.

The sub areas with the largest populations tend to have the greater number of amenity spaces larger than 1ha. However, the location of these sites is often on the periphery of the built up area. This in turn is likely to reduce their accessibility, and correspondingly their value, to the community.

Larger sites such as Montgomery Park and Carlton Meadow Park in North Lowestoft and South Lowestoft respectively are well integrated into residential areas providing good opportunities for a variety of uses and encourage people to use them.

Outside of Lowestoft the proportion of open spaces with amenity use larger than 1ha is small. In small settlements this is less of an issue, however, in the market towns there is a greater proportion of small spaces. In these areas an emphasis on improving the quality and value to provide a wider range of activities or character roles to encourage a wider cross-section of the community to use them would be most beneficial. This would assist with improving the townscape and ideally enhance their standing within the community to make them more of a focal point or destination.

### Accessibility

#### Number of dwellings within catchment areas of amenity green space

The Fields In Trust has recommended walking time as an appropriate measure of distance for people to access open space and ancillary facilities. For amenity green space, it is recommended that every dwelling should be within a one minute walk of an amenity green space. One minute walking distance is equivalent to approximately 100m. On the supporting maps which visually show catchment areas based on walking time, the walking distance is multiplied by a factor of 0.6 to account for people not being able to walk in a straight line to an open space. For amenity green spaces of at least 0.5ha in size a catchment of 400m (five minute walking time) has been used and for amenity green spaces larger than 1ha a catchment area of 1000m (15 minute walk) was considered most appropriate. These are consistent with accessibility standards recommended for equipped play areas.
In Waveney, 8% of dwellings are within a one minute walk of an amenity green space of an amenity green space. This low proportion is not surprising and does not show a clear indicator of any surplus or deficit of provision unless housing density in an area is particularly high. Residential areas with lower housing density generally have private gardens. As was evident in the public consultation undertaken as part of the Open Space Needs Assessment (2006) private gardens were the most preferable open spaces for parents to allow their children to play in. This indicates there could be less of a need for properties to be located so close to public open space with equipped play provision for very young children.

For open space with amenity value of at least 0.5ha in size, the proportion of dwellings located within 400m walking distance (5 minute walk) is 35% across the District (Figure 54). This is more reflective of accessibility and provides a clearer indication of how open space provision meets the needs of the community. Arguably, the catchment area of 400m is the most important indicator to identify whether existing provision is adequate or not.

Figure 54: Dwellings within the catchment area of amenity green space

- Properties within 100m of an amenity green space
- Properties within 400m of an amenity green space larger than 0.5ha
- Properties within 1000m of an amenity green space larger than 1ha
For large open spaces with amenity use, a little over half of the District is within 1000m (15 minute walk). Beccles, Bungay and the rural areas of the District have the poorest access to large amenity spaces.

The recommended standard is for every dwelling to have access to an amenity green space within 100m walking distance from home, however, the best provision is in Southwold & Reydon at only 15%. In Kessingland where there is a population of approximately 4300 people this provision is 4%. These figures are supressed because passive amenity green space is not included in this assessment. This is particularly relevant for localities such as Kessingland and Southwold where passive open space contributes significantly towards the total amount of open space. These passive amenity green spaces have limited value in terms of physical use by local residents. However, they are an important contributor towards enhancing the townscape and street scene (passive amenity space is discussed later in this section). Both Kessingland and Southwold have access to the beach which may mitigate part of this shortfall.

North Lowestoft, South Lowestoft and Southwold & Reydon have the greatest number of households within the catchment of an amenity green space larger than 1ha. With the exception of the rural areas, Beccles has the lowest number of households in close proximity to spaces of the same size and reflects the peripheral location of many of the larger amenity spaces. In Halesworth provision is very centrally located, however, there is only a single open space that provides this value.

In the rural parts of the District, access to amenity spaces close to home is limited. In these areas, open spaces tend to be multi-functional providing equipped play, ball sports and informal activities associated with amenity. While proximity close to home is low, these spaces are often centrally located and provide a focus for rural communities.
Accessibility in the Beccles area

A majority of amenity spaces in Beccles are located on the periphery of the town (Figure 7). This is highlighted by the relatively poor access to amenity green space in Beccles. Worlingham has experienced more recent housing development and open spaces have been better designed to be integrated to enhance their benefit to the community. This is evident by amenity green space being significantly more accessible to people living in Worlingham than the residential areas to the west in Beccles.

*Figure 55: Amenity green space catchment areas in Beccles*
Accessibility in the Bungay area

All of the amenity green spaces in Bungay are less than 1 hectare in size. Two spaces near the town centre provide access for people living in the north of the town and those who may be using shops and facilities in the town centre. In the south of the town, only the west provides adequate access to amenity space although the site on Woodland Road provides limited opportunities for use due to a lack of ancillary facilities. The east of Bungay is a residential area but has no provision of accessible amenity space (Figure 56). Open space provision in general is below the District average and improvements would benefit the community.

Figure 56: Amenity green space catchment areas in Bungay
Accessibility in the Halesworth area

Town Park is the largest and most central open space that provides amenity value in Halesworth (Figure 57). As part of a multi-functional open space that provides for play, recreation and semi-natural habitat in addition to amenity this is the most significant space in the town providing for the residential population and supporting the town centre. Other amenity spaces in the town offer limited value to people living in the area either because of their isolated location, a lack of ancillary facilities or poor layout.

Figure 57: Amenity green space catchment areas in Halesworth
Accessibility in the Kessingland area

The playing field in the north of the village is the most significant space that provides opportunities for amenity use (Figure 58). Its catchment covers more than half of the village. The southern part of the village has limited access to amenity green space. In the east, poor amenity space provision is offset by access to the beach which can support a wide range of activities. Of the open spaces in the west of the village, the site on the High Street supports the local village shops and provides amenity value that complements the primary use of the site which is for play. The only other open space with notable amenity value is located at Heritage Green, however, its location and layout has limited benefit for the local community. A majority of open spaces in Kessingland are small and while these are important to the townscape and street scene in their own right they provide limited opportunities for physical use.

*Figure 58: Amenity green space catchment areas in Kessingland*
Accessibility in the North Lowestoft area

Overall coverage is relatively good. A majority of open spaces with amenity value are larger than 1 hectare which provides greater opportunities for use and accordingly gives them a wider catchment. These larger spaces commonly offer amenity value as part of a multi-functional open space with play areas often present. The smaller amenity spaces are generally those with equipped play areas as the primary use and the amenity spaces has been provided to support unequipped play. Small open spaces that can support informal activities are limited and it is important to consider how these types of open spaces relate to their surroundings and how they contribute to the wider open space network. Provision of amenity open space in the central Lowestoft, particularly Harbour Ward, and in Oulton north of the Lowestoft to Norwich railway line is very poor (Figure 59). The proposed Woods Meadow development is expected to deliver a new Country Park which will improve access to amenity green space in the area. Opportunities should be sought to improve access to quality open spaces that offer good value to partially offset these deficits.

Figure 59: Amenity green space catchment areas in North Lowestoft
Accessibility in the **South Lowestoft** area

Overall coverage is relatively good, particularly in the Carlton Colville area (Figure 60). Similar to North Lowestoft, this coverage is primarily related to the larger catchments associated with open spaces larger than 1 hectare. Access to open space with amenity value smaller than 1 hectare is limited as represented by the smaller, darker catchment areas. This highlights the importance of larger open space provision. These larger open spaces are generally multi-functional increasing their value to the community. Kirkley, Whitton and Pakefield have the lowest amount of amenity green space, however, in Pakefield this is partially offset by easy access to the beach. In these aforementioned areas, emphasis should be placed on improving quality and value to mitigate the impact of reduced accessibility to open spaces.

*Figure 60: Amenity green space catchment areas in South Lowestoft*
Accessibility in the Southwold & Reydon area

Southwold has good provision of open space offering amenity use (Figure 61). This is a key feature of the local townscape and its attractiveness for residents and visitors alike. Complementing this type of open space provision there is access to Southwold Common and the Denes south of the town and the beach. In Reydon, which provides much of the residential area for Southwold, amenity space provision is much more limited with only the north of the village having good access. The recreation ground, is the largest amenity green space in Reydon and provides for informal activities, ball games and play. Located on the periphery of the residential area it also has car parking. The open space located on Wangford Road is the most centrally located amenity space in the built up area which is designed to be used in a similar fashion to a village green. Its catchment is small, however, its role in the community is expected to be larger than represented on the accessibility map. The playing fields located adjacent to the community centre (Wangford Road) provide a large amenity space for people living in the north of the Reydon.

Figure 61: Amenity green space catchment areas in Southwold & Reydon
Accessibility in the Rural areas
Settlements in the rural parts of the District generally have their amenity open space needs met through open spaces that are multi-functional. Access to the countryside also helps to offset deficits of amenity green space. The nature of the spaces and the variety of activities they can support make them a focal point of small villages. The location of rural settlements inherently makes facilities more difficult to access than in urban areas emphasising the importance of these multi-function open spaces. Emphasis should be placed on improving quality and value where required to encourage local residents to use these spaces and improve their contribution to the townscape and the rural setting. The location and catchment areas of amenity green spaces in the larger villages are shown in Figures 62 to 65.

Figure 62: Amenity green space catchment areas in Barnby and North Cove

Figure 63: Amenity green space catchment areas in Blundeston

Figure 64: Amenity green space catchment areas in Holton

Figure 65: Amenity green space catchment areas in Wangford
Quality and value of amenity green space

The quality of an amenity green space is reflective of the provision and condition of its features and characteristics. Quality is primarily focussed on the site itself which includes what is provided on site, condition of facilities and the immediate surroundings.

The attributes assessed for quality are set out in Table 27. The scores were standardised to allow comparisons between quality and value and for consistency across all open spaces that were assessed.

Table 27: Quality attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provision and condition</th>
<th>Extent of misuse</th>
<th>Characteristics and aesthetic qualities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Paths and drives</td>
<td>• Litter</td>
<td>• Colourful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Walls, railings, fences</td>
<td>• Dog fouling</td>
<td>• Amount of interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trees</td>
<td>• Vandalism</td>
<td>• Layout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shrubs and hedges</td>
<td>• Graffiti</td>
<td>• Attractiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Grass</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Fragmentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Litter bins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dog litter bins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Seating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The value of an amenity green space relates to how the space relates to its surroundings and the function it provides for the local community. The value of a space is much more dependent on what is provided and what it offers the community to encourage recreational use. Quality and value are interrelated.

The attributes assessed for quality are set out in Table 28. The scores were standardised to allow comparisons between quality and value and for consistency across all open spaces that were assessed.

Table 28: Value attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessibility</th>
<th>Value of the open space</th>
<th>Habitat value</th>
<th>Characteristics and aesthetic qualities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Adequate access points for pedestrians</td>
<td>• Education</td>
<td>• Woodland, tree groups, avenues, individual trees</td>
<td>• Integral to surroundings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Culture</td>
<td>• Shrubs</td>
<td>• Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Contribution to the townscape</td>
<td>• Hedges</td>
<td>• Isolated location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Natural grass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quality of amenity green space

Spaces of higher quality are more likely to encourage people to use them. These spaces have the potential to be more of a focal point in the local community, particularly for those living nearby. Amenity spaces with a quality rating of ‘medium’ are generally considered to be ordinary and unremarkable but provide space that is of value. Characteristically these spaces have limited facilities to encourage a solid cross section of the community to use them and visually often lack structured features such as landscaping and planting. The proportion of low, medium and high quality amenity green spaces is shown in Figure 66.

Spaces that are of low quality have few endearing features that capture the interest of potential users. Low quality spaces generally discourage use and offer low value to the community. Considerations should be given to improvements to the quality of low quality spaces to make them more attractive to encourage people to use them. Particular attention should be given to the role they are intended to play in the community.

*Figure 66: Proportion of low, medium and high quality green space with amenity as the primary use*
Value of green space with amenity as the primary use

Spaces that are of high value relate well to neighbouring built up areas (residential or employment) in both the immediate vicinity and the wider surroundings of the townscape. They provide a range of activities that encourage people to use the space and can provide for a variety of cultural and educational needs. Spaces are important in built up areas and provide recreational activities and a contrast to the built environment. In rural areas, a significant number of open spaces are associated with the village hall providing a focal point for the community. These rural open spaces often have additional use as playing fields therefore their ‘medium’ rating may reflect their value in the context of amenity but their value as an overall open space to the community is higher. The proportion of low, medium and high value amenity green spaces is shown in Figure 67.

Spaces with medium value are an important asset within the built environment and should be considered to be of a higher standing than medium quality ratings which demonstrate a standard which more or less meets the status quo. This is because they reflect the importance to the community rather than just characteristics of the space in isolation. While it can be difficult to improve the value of an open space within the built environment ‘medium’ value should be viewed as the minimum standard to be provided as part of future open space provision to be an adequate facility for the community. This is an important consideration whether it be for new development or for existing sites that have other uses such as ‘play’ which may be reconsidered as part of any process of devolution.

Figure 67: Proportion of low, medium and high value green space with amenity as the primary use
Quality and value of amenity spaces in the Beccles area

Overall, the Beccles sub area is primarily has amenity spaces that are medium and high quality (Figure 68). The highest quality open spaces with an amenity function in the Beccles sub area are found in Worlingham where a majority of sites are rated as ‘high quality’. Amenity spaces located in the west of the town are generally of ‘medium quality’. There is a notable difference between quality and value of amenity open spaces in the area with open space in Worlingham having lower value than its comparable quality rating where as in the west of Beccles the opposite is apparent (Figure 69). This does not necessarily indicate amenity space in Worlingham is more important, however, it is more reflective of the fact that these amenity spaces are a secondary function as opposed to those in west Beccles where amenity is the primary function.

Central Beccles is poorly provided for. The quality of the two amenity spaces in this area range between low and high. Their value tends to be lower overall. The south of Beccles is predominantly residential and the deficit of amenity space provision is very apparent. Within the built up area, new amenity space will be difficult to provide indicating that improvements to existing spaces and green areas in the public realm should be the focus.

To the north of the town is The Quay which provides a medium quality open space with similar value. As part of a multi-functional open space this space is important for the local community despite its peripheral location. In addition, Beccles Common provides an area of significant size that can support opportunities for amenity activities.
Figure 68: Quality of amenity green space in Beccles

Figure 69: Value of amenity green space in Beccles
Quality and value of amenity spaces in the Bungay area

Bungay has a limited amount of amenity space available for its population to use, particularly in the east and south of the town. Where amenity open space is available it is generally of medium quality except for Bigod Castle which is of high quality. These spaces have similar value ratings except for Woodland Drive which offers low value. The restricted accessibility to amenity space with only medium value suggests that an emphasis should be placed on improving their quality and value to make them more important to local residents and to facilitate greater opportunities for use (Figures 70 and 71).

Figure 70: Quality of amenity green space in Bungay

Figure 71: Value of amenity green space in Bungay
Quality and value of amenity spaces in the Halesworth area

With the exception of North Lowestoft, Halesworth has the lowest proportion of low quality and value ratings. Town Park in the centre of Halesworth has the highest quality and offers the greatest value (Figures 72 and 73). It is well integrated into a series of open spaces that are semi natural in nature which are key parts of the green infrastructure in the town. There are only three other sites of notable amenity value with two of these offering both low quality and low value. The third, Bramfield Road, is of medium quality and value but is relatively isolated from the built up area in the south of the town. The provision of amenity green spaces (other than Town Park) not only offer limited quality and value, they are in areas that have limited open space provision overall. The role of these spaces in the community and ways for them to be improved to make them more attractive for local people to use should be considered.

Figure 72: Quality of amenity green space in Halesworth

Figure 73: Value of amenity green space in Halesworth
Quality and value of amenity spaces in the Kessingland area

The limited amount of amenity open space in Kessingland is exaggerated by their lower quality and value of amenity. The playing field which provide the greatest opportunity for physical activities is of medium value but is of low quality (Figures 74 and 75). This site in particular should be considered for improvement as it is the only significant multi-functional space in the village. The open space in the High Street is of medium quality offering similar value, however its primary function is for play. The remaining site, situated at Heritage Green is a high quality space but offers low value reflecting its poor location and layout.

Figure 74: Quality of amenity green space in Kessingland

Figure 75: Value of amenity green space in Kessingland
Quality and value of amenity spaces in the North Lowestoft area

Amenity spaces in North Lowestoft are generally of higher value but with lower levels of quality (Figures 76 and 77). Small open spaces in particular consistently demonstrate low to medium quality and value. These sites often have amenity as a secondary function to support unequipped play activities. Oulton and Harbour Wards are in need of improvements to offer greater value to the community. Adjacent to the coast are located several open spaces with quality and value ranging from one end of the spectrum to the other. As part of the Lowestoft Lake Lothing and Outer Harbour Area Action Plan this area is identified as the East of England Park. As part of a key area to contribute towards the regeneration of Lowestoft the East of England Park will seek to improve the quality of these open spaces and make them a more valuable asset for the local community.

Figure 76: Quality of amenity green space in North Lowestoft

Figure 77: Value of amenity green space in North Lowestoft
Quality and value of amenity spaces in the South Lowestoft area

Similar to North Lowestoft, the amenity spaces of higher quality offering greater value to the community are the larger amenity open spaces (Figures 78 and 79). While there are a greater number of amenity spaces in South Lowestoft those not classified as parks are generally of medium and low quality and offer similar levels of value. The amenity spaces larger than 1 hectare show good coverage of the residential area, however, when considering the distribution there are significant gaps in quality provision. Outside of Carlton Colville and the areas surrounding Nicholas Everitt, Kirkley Fen and Rosedale Parks the quality and value is medium to low. Areas in need of improvement to not only the sites themselves but also their accessibility include Whitton, Pakefield, and Kirkley. These areas are served by amenity spaces that are of medium to high quality but these offer only low to medium value and should be considered for improvement.

Figure 78: Quality of amenity green space in South Lowestoft

Figure 79: Value of amenity green space in South Lowestoft
Quality and value of amenity spaces in the Southwold & Reydon area
Amenity spaces in Southwold are all of medium to high quality and generally offer high value (Figures 80 and 81). Overall, value and quality in this sub area is the highest in the District. In Reydon the recreation ground, the largest space in the town, offers the highest quality and value highlighting its importance to the area despite its peripheral location. This site is supported by the playing fields located adjacent to the community centre and an amenity space located on Wangford Road considered to be of both medium quality and value. The south side of Reydon lies outside the catchment area for any amenity space, however, the quality and value provided at the recreation ground is likely to make this more attractive for local people to use and therefore facilitate greater travel distances. To encourage people to use these facilities and access them by means other than by private vehicle, consideration should be given to improving accessibility through public realm enhancement.

Figure 80: Quality of amenity green space in Southwold and Reydon

Figure 81: Value of amenity green space in Southwold and Reydon
Quality and value of green space with amenity as a secondary use

Open spaces that have amenity as a secondary function tend to be of higher quality and value compared to open space where amenity is the primary function (Figure 82 and 83). They can fulfil a number of different functions within the community.

Beccles, Halesworth, North Lowestoft and South Lowestoft have the highest proportion of these multi-functional spaces with amenity value. Kessingland and Southwold & Reydon have the fewest number of multi-functional open spaces offering secondary amenity value.

Only Halesworth, North Lowestoft and South Lowestoft have sites where amenity green space is of both low quality and value. These lowly rated spaces generally offer limited opportunities for activities and many do not have basic ancillary facilities such as seating or planting that has potential to capture local interest.

Figure 82: Proportion of low, medium and high quality green space with amenity as a secondary use
Quality and value of green space with amenity use overall

Green space with amenity use as either a primary or secondary use is generally of a satisfactory to good standard with a majority of spaces being at least medium quality and medium value (Figures 84 and 85). There are issues, however, that the layout and provision of ancillary facilities does not reflect the character of the surrounding area. Across the District, amenity spaces appear fairly generic and improvements to landscaping, planting and ancillary facilities would markedly improve their value to the local area and as a wider network of open spaces.

The best overall provision in terms of quality and value is in Beccles and Southwold & Reydon. South Lowestoft has significantly more individual open spaces than other parts of the District and provision quality and value is good. In contrast, North Lowestoft has more amenity space than any other sub area but the proportion of low quality with low value spaces is significant (Figure 18 and 19). Halesworth has relatively few amenity spaces to serve the population and is highly reliant on spaces that are multi-functional. Quality and value in the Halesworth area is mixed.
Figure 84: Proportion of low, medium and high quality amenity green space (includes all green space with amenity as a primary or secondary use)

Figure 85: Proportion of low, medium and high value amenity green space (includes all green space with amenity as a primary or secondary use)
Deprivation

Overall, the quantity of amenity green space does not reflect levels of deprivation. This demonstrates that amenity spaces are maintained to a consistent standard across the District. In areas where there are higher levels of deprivation, improved access to quality amenity green space will contribute towards the enhancement of the area and encourage people to be more active and use these public spaces.

The quality and value of amenity green space (where amenity is the primary use) does not have a strong relationship with the amount of deprivation between sub areas. This in part results from smaller areas of high deprivation being masked by areas of low deprivation within the sub area (eg. Whitton is a deprived area but Carlton Colville has much lower levels of deprivation in comparison, however, both are within the South Lowestoft sub area). To give greater clarity about the location of amenity green spaces in relation to deprivation, sites have been colour coded in Table 30.

Table 29: Sub area deprivation and amenity green space provision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub area</th>
<th>Deprivation</th>
<th>Total amenity green space (ha)</th>
<th>Amenity green space provision per 1000 people (ha)</th>
<th>Provision relative to recommended standard of 0.6ha per 1000 people</th>
<th>Ranked average quality of amenity green space (1 = lowest quality, 8 = highest quality)</th>
<th>Ranked average value of amenity green space (1 = lowest value, 8 = highest value)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beccles</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>-4.68</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bungay</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halesworth</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>-1.12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kessingland</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Lowestoft</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>39.62</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>17.97</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Lowestoft</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>-2.22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwold &amp; Reydon</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.81</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>83.63</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>14.48</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quality and value combinations and a suggested policy approach

**Colour notation**
- Most deprived (upper quartile of all parishes (wards in Lowestoft))
- Higher than average deprivation (middle upper quartile of all parishes (wards in Lowestoft))
- Lower than average deprivation (lower middle quartile of all parishes (wards in Lowestoft))
- Least deprived (bottom quarter of all parishes (wards in Lowestoft))

**Table 30: Suggested policy approach**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High quality</th>
<th>Low value</th>
<th>High quality</th>
<th>Medium value</th>
<th>High quality</th>
<th>High value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enhance value in terms of its primary purpose.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Spaces should be protected.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kessingland</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Bungay</strong></td>
<td>Bigod Castle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Heritage Green (south)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Reydon</strong></td>
<td>Recreation Ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beccles</strong></td>
<td>Kilbrack Gardens</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Southwold</strong></td>
<td>St Edmund’s Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>North Lowestoft</strong></td>
<td>Gainsborough Drive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bartholomew’s Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>South Lowestoft</strong></td>
<td>Grand Avenue</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gun Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Milnes Way</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Rural: Blundeston</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Rural: Lound</strong></td>
<td>Church Pond</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Rural: Somerleyton</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Rural: Somerleyton</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium quality</th>
<th>Low value</th>
<th>Medium quality</th>
<th>Medium value</th>
<th>Medium quality</th>
<th>High value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enhance quality provided it is possible also possible to enhance their value.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Enhance quality and value with an emphasis on improving the value of the space.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bungay</strong></td>
<td>Woodland Drive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Beccles</strong></td>
<td>St Mary’s Paddock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Waveney Meadow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kessingland</strong></td>
<td>Community Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>North Lowestoft</strong></td>
<td>Oulton Community Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Net Drying Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>North Lowestoft</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>South Lowestoft</strong></td>
<td>Pakefield Cliffs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Low quality | Low value

Enhance quality provided it is possible to also enhance their value. If it is not possible the space may be ‘surplus to requirements’ in terms of its present use.

- Beccles
  - Bramley Rise
- Halesworth
  - Kennedy Close
- North Lowestoft
  - East of Sparrow’s Nest
  - Holly Hill

### Low quality | Medium value

Enhance quality and value with an emphasis on improving the quality of the space.

- South Lowestoft
  - Carlton Colville Community Centre
  - Cliftonville Road
  - Bixley Green
  - Pakefield Park

### Low quality | High value

Enhance quality and protect the space.

- South Lowestoft
  - Uplands Community Centre
Passive amenity green space

A significant number of open spaces provide visual amenity value but offer limited value for physical use. These spaces, in the context of this open space needs assessment are classified as ‘passive amenity spaces’.

While some spaces are designed to provide openness and colour to enhance the townscape and street scene others appear to have an unclear role in the built up area. Some of the green spaces provide seating and planting while others have no ancillary facilities to make them attractive of use or visual enhancement of the townscape. A significant number of sites have signage discouraging people from using them. Often the signage is appropriate while others are in various levels of disrepair through vandalism or faded so to be a negative contributor to the space.

Offering little value as open space for physical use these spaces have not been included as part of the amenity green space quantitative assessment and therefore do not contribute towards the quantitative total of open space provision. It is, however, considered appropriate to discuss the provision of these spaces as it highlights how open space is provided and how provision alone does not necessarily meet the needs of a community.

Quantitative provision of passive amenity space

The total amount of passive amenity space in the Waveney is approximately 19 hectares. This is about 11% of total open space provision in Waveney (Table 8). Of the total amenity space available, 19% is considered to be passive. The proportions of amenity green space that is has amenity as the primary use and passive use is shown in Figure 86.
Table 31: Amount of passive amenity green space

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub area</th>
<th>Total area of open space (including passive amenity space) (ha)</th>
<th>Area of open space with amenity as the primary use (ha)</th>
<th>Area of open space with passive amenity as the primary use (ha)</th>
<th>Amount of open space with amenity as the primary use (%)</th>
<th>Amount of amenity green space with passive amenity as the primary use (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beccles</td>
<td>17.49</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>24.01</td>
<td>13.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bungay</td>
<td>5.60</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>62.68</td>
<td>19.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halesworth</td>
<td>5.49</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>31.33</td>
<td>9.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kessingland</td>
<td>6.38</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>38.87</td>
<td>42.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Lowestoft</td>
<td>65.96</td>
<td>39.62</td>
<td>6.43</td>
<td>60.07</td>
<td>9.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Lowestoft</td>
<td>49.16</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>37.43</td>
<td>7.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwold &amp; Reydon</td>
<td>10.90</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>44.86</td>
<td>20.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>19.68</td>
<td>8.81</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>44.77</td>
<td>2.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>180.66</td>
<td>83.63</td>
<td>19.84</td>
<td>46.29</td>
<td>10.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 86: Proportion of amenity green space that is ‘passive’
Quantitative provision of passive amenity space

The quality of passive amenity green space is generally quite low across the District (60%) (Figure 87). The highest proportion of low quality spaces are found in North and South Lowestoft which are also the area with the largest amounts of open space indicating that sites more likely to be used by the public for physical activities is the focus for improvement and upkeep.

The areas of Bungay, Halesworth and the rural communities have a higher proportion of higher quality passive amenity green spaces, however, these areas also have some of the lowest levels of open space provision overall which could reflect resources being less thinly spread in the area.

Kessingland has approximately half of its passive amenity green spaces rated as low quality. When considered that over half of the amenity green space in the village offers few opportunities for physical use this figure is high.

Figure 87: Proportion of low, medium and high quality passive amenity green space

The value of passive amenity green spaces is quite contrary to the quality of these spaces (Figure 88). In Beccles the quality and value of passive amenity space is generally low. In North and South Lowestoft the value of these spaces is often higher than their quality suggests. In Bungay, the opposite is present where amenity green spaces offer much lower value. In Bungay, this suggests...
that passive amenity green spaces enhance the townscape but do not adequately supplement the limited open space provision available in the town.

*Figure 88: Proportion of low, medium and high value passive amenity green space*

**Passive amenity space in North Lowestoft, South Lowestoft and the Rural areas**
Outside of the rural areas of the District, North and South Lowestoft have the largest amount of passive amenity space which reflects these two areas having the largest populations. The smallest amount of passive amenity space is found in the rural communities reflecting the small nature of these settlements and their setting in the countryside. The quality of these passive amenity spaces is generally low but their value to an area is higher.

**Passive amenity space in Bungay and Halesworth**
Of the market towns, Bungay and Halesworth have smallest amount of passive amenity space contributing to over 20% of their total amenity space provision. Given the small amount of total open space provision in Bungay, this is relatively high.

**Passive amenity space in Beccles and Southwold & Reydon**
Beccles and Southwold & Reydon have significantly high proportions of their amenity space provision in the passive form. Within the sub areas, however, there are different patterns of distribution. In Southwold & Reydon much of the passive amenity space is located in close proximity to the waterfront, the Denes and the Common. The concentration of these spaces creates a sense of openness and connectivity which is an important characteristic of this seaside town. In the Beccles sub area many of the spaces are quite isolated and while they provide openness in the built up area
they often poorly relate to their surroundings and consequently offer limited benefit to the community.

**Passive amenity space in Kessingland**

Passive amenity space contributes to 42% of total open space and 55% of amenity space provision in the village which is distributed over 31 individual spaces. This is the most significant proportion in the District. The village has two open spaces with amenity as the primary use (Community Centre and High Street) and no open spaces which support amenity as a secondary use. Some of this is a result from open spaces being too small or poorly located while others are poorly designed or lack ancillary facilities such as seating and landscaping. The lack of quality amenity green space offering good value is an issue in the village. Almost all of these open spaces are located within residential areas making them accessible but offer limited opportunities to rectify existing quantity deficits.

Beccles, Kessingland, North and South Lowestoft and Southwold & Reydon have the most significant proportions of passive amenity space. In these areas the number of spaces rated as low quality and/or low value is relatively high when compared to other forms of open space.

Passive amenity green spaces provide openness and colour in the built environment, however, plain sites with little planting or landscaping limit the value the spaces have in the townscape and wider open space network. In the past some of these spaces may have had a different role in the community when development initially took place. For example, some equipped play areas may have been decommissioned when the equipment came to the end of its life and not replaced. Others may have had ancillary facilities that may have been removed while others may have been larger open spaces that have been encroached upon by new development. As a result, once useful open spaces have now become simple areas of grass and limited planting that offer limited value to the community and surroundings.

Passive amenity green spaces have potential to play a greater role in residential areas by enhancing spaces through landscaping and where appropriate providing benches. For people with young children this can provide unequipped play space and provide seating for parents. Waveney has an aging population and places to sit and rest can encourage people to be more active. This is particularly important when trying to encourage people to be more active in their community (social inclusion).

In some locations, areas that should be available for unequipped play or amenity use are set out to discourage people from using them. While there is a need to ensure enough open space is available for public use there are often difficulties with people using spaces inappropriately and being a disturbance to neighbours. However, it is also important to recognise that open spaces are designed into developments to be used and not simply provided as an extension to an adjacent garden or view.
The location and design of amenity spaces are important to consider early in the planning process to ensure they have a role to play in the local area and contribute positively to the public realm. Providing spaces with different features and characteristics can make them more attractive to different people in the community and encourage greater use. In this way, a network of open spaces can be created and maintained to improve the identity of an area.

**Example: Passive amenity spaces - Heritage Green, Kessingland**

Relatively recent development in Kessingland (Heritage Green) highlights how new open space provision can enhance an area and also create space with little value. Three open spaces have provided as part of the development.

Open Space A: Located between the High Street and the A12 there are three open spaces. The first is located at the western end of Heritage Green. This space is provides amenity with a path running along the east side connecting two roads with supplementary seating and a good amount of planting. The site is pinned between the High Street which is busy with vehicular traffic and high solid fencing along property boundaries. While this space provides openness, its setting and characteristics have created a space that is poorly integrated into the townscape offering limited value and is unlikely to encourage people to use the space.

Open Space B: Along Heritage Green to the north a second space is the focal point for residential development. While there is limited public access onto the site itself it is well landscaped and planted and as an amenity space provides good value and contributes positively to the townscape.

Open Space C: At the northern end of Heritage Green a third space is provided. A small lagoon provides drainage and a small wildlife habitat. The site itself is poorly integrated into the existing community or the development it was meant to serve. The open space is isolated, poorly overlooked, relatively featureless and its boundaries are harsh and unattractive including high fencing on one side and the busy A12 on the other. A site of very low quality and offering little value for residents or the townscape this is an example of where open space has been provided as part of a development but has not been designed into the development and has provides little benefit to anyone with limited scope for improvement in the given its location and surroundings.

As a practical example, this demonstrates how open space may contribute quantitatively to local standards and can enhance an area but can also be provide in a way that is not properly integrated into a development and offering little value to the community. To meet the needs of the community, open space should be delivered in a way that will benefit the community and enhance the townscape. The Heritage Green example demonstrates the need to identify the role an open space is provide in a new development and how it relates to the existing built area as part of the design stage and planning process as the proposal comes forward.
Changing the use of existing open space to an alternative open space use

Over time, the role of an open space may change. For example, decommissioning or removing play equipment that has come to the end of its useful life. Consideration should be given to how a site might be improved to encourage use to avoid creating passive amenity spaces that offer little value. If left unequipped consideration should be given to additional planting. New landscaping may enhance the space and the setting and retain its value to the community and townscape. Where an open space is proposed for a change of open space use a plan of how the open space is expected to be used, the value it will offer to the community should be set out. This will help ensure that open space provision can be improved and avoid creating passive amenity green spaces unnecessarily.

Amenity green space recommendations

Amenity spaces are of higher quality and value where they are part of a larger multi-functional open space. Providing opportunities for informal activities within multi-functional open spaces will complement other activities such as play, exercise and general leisure activities. Facilities that support activities for a variety of age groups will assist with creating places that are a focal point in the community.

Improving access to amenity green spaces, particularly in the most deprived areas of the District, will provide benefits for health by encouraging physical activity and help to improve the townscape, street scene and overall image of an area.

Many amenity green spaces offer good value to the local area and the townscape, however, some offer limited benefit often reflecting their location, surroundings, provision of ancillary facilities, planting and layouts which collectively do not encourage use. A strategic management plan should be considered to improve the quality and value of amenity green spaces, increase their value to the local community and enhance the local surroundings. Such a plan could identify the role each amenity green space fulfils, general activities the site is likely to be used for based on ancillary facility provision, landscaping and layout of the site, if the management of the space is to retain the status quo or if there is scope for improvement, identify green spaces that should be prioritised that could be more multi-functional to encourage greater use and enhance their value to the local community. As a management plan this would contribute towards a strategic approach to improving open space provision and the public realm.

Improving the quality of passive amenity green space should be prioritised in areas with low levels of open space provision to improve the public realm.
Some passive amenity spaces provide little benefit for the community in their current form. If improvement is not considered a feasible option, its use as an alternative form of open space could be considered.

**Beccles**

**Amenity green space recommendations**

**Waveney Meadow and Bramley Rise:**
A lack of provision and access to amenity space in Beccles suggests that improvements should be made to Waveney Meadow and Bramley Rise although the latter is restricted by the lie of the land. Bramley Rise currently has a small play area but its amenity quality and value is low. Waveney Meadow has greater potential to be a multi-functional open space providing more value for the community.

**Land adjacent to Beccles Cemetery (south):**
Beccles Cemetery in the south west of the town provides habitat for wildlife. Land adjacent to the south of the cemetery is a fenced field with a walkway/cycleway running along its southern boundary. Providing public access and improving the space through planting and supplementary facilities such as seating could increase access to amenity space in this area. Avoiding the creation of a complicated amenity space which could be expensive, the site could be kept relatively simple with the opportunity to provide land for any future extension of the cemetery if required.
**Bungay**

Amenity green space recommendations

**Castle Hills:**
Improvements will provide more benefit for the community and enhance the town centre while also complementing the Bigod Castle open space. Improvements may include improved seating, access paths in the grassed area and slopes and improving the walking path through the semi-natural areas to make them more accessible to people and in all weather (while respecting the natural character of the area).

**Top Pitch:**
The Annis Hill playing field (commonly referred to as the ‘top pitch’) is part of Bungay High School and has limited use. The field is not publically accessible. The potential to open this up for public access could be explored.

**Former Old Grammar School Playing Field and Skinner’s Meadow:**
The site is being improved to provide play facilities for children to compliment the future community centre and the existing skate park. Opposite this site is Skinners Meadow. Currently used for grazing, the potential for public access to part of the site, as a semi-natural area, could be explored.

**Kessingland**

Amenity green space recommendations

**Playing Field:**
Kessingland playing field should be improved to provide greater value to the community. A masterplan setting out a how the site could be used in the future whilst maintaining its current use as an equipped play area and a playing field. This would complement the community centre and activity opportunities not available at the other main open space in the village located on the High Street.

**Passive Amenity Space in General:**
Much of the open space in Kessingland is classified as ‘passive amenity space’ offering limited value for residents. Consideration should be given to how these sites contribute to the townscape as a network of open spaces. Providing ancillary facilities such as seating and planting on passive amenity spaces could assist with creating walking routes to destinations such as the village centre, beach or the playing field that could encourage people to be more active.
North Lowestoft
Amenity green space recommendations

Central Lowestoft in General:
No significant amenity green space is provided for community use and there is little opportunity to provide new amenity space owing to the built up nature of the area. Emphasis should be placed on improving accessibility to green spaces such as the proposed East of England Park and Normanston Park. Existing passive amenity spaces and the disused railway line, the Eastern Linear Park, could provide opportunities to support this. Accessibility should also be improved in the northern residential areas to enhance connections to Montgomery Park and Foxborough Road area.

Kesgrave Drive:
The large amenity space at Kesgrave Drive is primarily a large grassed area with some play equipment for children. A small pond is located on site. The site is large enough to support a range of activities. Landscaping and additional planting along with ancillary facilities such as paths and seating provided creative manner would improve the value of the space for the community. The provision of facilities to support activities not available in Normanston Park could be provided on the site so the sites complement each other.

The open nature of the site with minimal on site provision provides an open canvas in which to consider any possible improvements. Ideally, this would be guided by a masterplan of the site. Care would need to be taken to create a space that does not conflict with the activities provided at Normanston Park (whose grassed area is primarily set up as formal sports pitches) so the two areas complement rather than compete with each other.

Woods Meadow:
To the west, provision in Oulton is poor. New open space is to be provided as part of the proposed Woods Meadow development which should enhance the area. With no significant amenity spaces in the area, accessibility should be improved. Opportunities present themselves along the public right of way which runs west of Mobbs Way and the walkways through Bonds Meadow. Accessibility can also be improved by improving the walk/cycle network through the Dunston Drive open space and the land south of the Mobbs Way industrial estate.
South Lowestoft
Amenity green space recommendations

Beccles Road area and Pakefield
Improvements should be made to amenity spaces in Pakefield and the central area in the vicinity of Britten Road and Oakwood Road. Residential areas in the vicinity of Beccles Road also have limited access to spaces with good quality and value. Improving accessibility in the area would increase the benefit these spaces have for local residents.

Bixley Green
Located in a densely populated area with limited access to private garden space and public green spaces. Improving the quality of provision on the site would benefit the local area.

Southwold & Reydon
Amenity green space recommendations

Overall, provision is this sub area is good. Considering the needs of other sub areas, Southwold & Reydon should be considered a lower priority, however, new amenity space provision in the southern part of Reydon should be explored if opportunities arise to address an existing accessibility deficit.

Rural Areas
Amenity green space recommendations

A majority of rural settlements have access to amenity space. People in rural areas also have greater access to the countryside which can offset existing shortfalls. Amenity green spaces should be maintained to a standard where they complement other facilities on site to create quality multi-functional spaces.