

# Chelmsford City Council

## Parks, Green Spaces and Waterways Strategy

*‘Parks, green spaces and waterways are unique assets, making places attractive and distinctive and encouraging healthy, active and enjoyable lifestyles; their intrinsic value measured in terms of broader social, economic and environmental benefits’*

### Context

1. The Parks, Green Spaces and Waterways Strategy sets the context for and offers a framework for:

**The protection, creation, and the effective management of a network of high-quality green spaces and associated waterways serving all people who choose to live, work or visit Chelmsford and the surrounding areas**

2. Research over the last ten years<sup>1</sup> has built the case for parks and green spaces as a core community asset, access to which is now considered to be a ‘fundamental human right’. Physical health, mental wellbeing and life satisfaction are all enhanced through access to and the use of parks, green spaces and waterways. The value and benefits of parks, green spaces and waterways to individuals, and to society generally, is now extensively evidenced<sup>2</sup>. The economic value of parks, green spaces and waterways has been exemplified in recent publications such as ‘Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces’<sup>3</sup> and ‘Valuing Urban Green Space’<sup>4</sup>.
3. Parks, green spaces and waterways:
  - are vital to placemaking, enhancing the physical character of an area, shaping existing and future development, reinforcing local identity and civic pride, whilst providing essential social, community and cultural facilities
  - provide places and opportunities for relaxation and enjoyment, education and social contact, promoting the culture and heritage of the place
  - offer spaces for physical exercise, including sport, recreation and informal play
  - create opportunities for residents to engage with their communities, promoting social cohesion and helping to deal with inequalities in society

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<sup>1</sup> Space to Thrive – A Rapid Evidence Review of the Benefits of Parks and Green Spaces for People and Communities [Dodson, Harris, Eadson & Gore 2019]

<sup>2</sup> Future of Public Parks Inquiry [The Communities and Local Government Committee 2017]

<sup>3</sup> Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces: Measuring their Economic and Wellbeing Value to Individuals [Fields in Trust 2018]

<sup>4</sup> Valuing Urban Green Spaces: Challenges and Opportunities [UCL Policy Briefing October 2014]

- are at the heart of a sustainable way of living, improving air quality, limiting the impacts of pollution, reducing the incidence of noise nuisance, decreasing the risks of and mitigating the effects of flooding, making places more comfortable, safer and desirable
- make a significant contribution to mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change, absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, acting as carbon sinks, offering natural ‘air conditioning’ through cooling and shading, moderating temperature and harm from heatwaves, helping to reduce energy consumption
- are central to preserving and restoring natural ecosystems and habitats and creating a network of ‘travel corridors’ for wildlife, thereby protecting and enriching biodiversity and helping wildlife populations to thrive
- provide safe and connected routes between places, encouraging sustainable travel choices and enabling people to connect with nature, enjoy contact with wildlife and the natural world
- provide opportunities for local food production
- are beneficial economically, encouraging inward investment, urban regeneration, and raising property values generally, as well as helping to boost the economic potential of cultural, leisure and tourism activities

4. The primary purpose of the Parks, Green Spaces and Waterways Strategy is to:

- **assess the supply and demand for open space in order to identify any deficiencies and to secure new or enhanced provision where it is needed**
- **identify potential actions to improve the quality, diversity, and attraction of parks, green spaces and waterways**
- **through effective management practices help ensure that the environmental, placemaking and health and wellbeing priorities of the Council are achieved**

## Relationship with other strategies and plans

5. The Parks, Green Spaces and Waterways Strategy shares many of the ambitions set out in ‘**Our Chelmsford Our Plan**’<sup>5</sup>, geared toward ‘*making Chelmsford a more attractive place, promoting Chelmsford’s green credentials, ensuring that communities are safe and creating a distinctive sense of place*’.
6. An abundant green infrastructure, including a network of interconnected parks, green spaces and waterways, is also considered to be fundamental to achieving a number of

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<sup>5</sup> ‘Our Chelmsford Our Plan’ was approved by the Council on 22 January 2020

the actions identified to address the **Climate and Ecological Emergency** declared by the Council on 16 July 2019. Critical objectives in the Action Plan include a 10-year greening and mass tree planting programme intended to increase tree cover in the area to at least 20% by 2030, joining-up and improving the habitat and attraction of river corridors and creating new, easily accessible natural green spaces to serve housing growth areas.

7. Many important habitats are located within parks, green spaces, the meadows alongside rivers and the woodlands distributed around the area. Protecting and expanding natural habitats and increasing biodiversity is a focus of the site management plans for these areas.
8. Parks, green spaces, waterways and other public places provide many opportunities for people to enjoy a healthy, safe and fulfilling life, helping to address health inequalities, loneliness and social isolation and other priorities identified in the **Health and Wellbeing Plan for Chelmsford**<sup>6</sup>. Taking part in sport and recreation, being physically active and experiencing nature and the benefits of being outside are proven factors contributing to the physical and mental health and wellbeing of communities.
9. The **Chelmsford Local Plan**<sup>7</sup> is focused on achieving sustainable growth and development, including, amongst others, strategic priorities and policies to ensure that appropriate levels of open [green] space are available to all communities, to protect and enhance sports and recreation facilities and to identify opportunities to expand the green infrastructure. In particular:
  - Strategic Priority 7 – concerned with protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment and the Green Belt
  - Strategic Priority 8 – concerned with creating well designed and attractive places and promoting healthy communities
  - Strategic Policy S2 – focused on addressing climate change and flood risk
  - Strategic Policy S4 – focused on conserving and enhancing the natural environment
  - Strategic Policy S9 – in respect of the green infrastructure required to support new development and achieving net gains in biodiversity
  - Development Management Policy DM24 –in relation to design and place shaping principles in major developments relevant to public open space and other landscape features

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<sup>6</sup> The 'Health and Wellbeing Plan for Chelmsford' was adopted on 19 November 2019

<sup>7</sup> The 'Chelmsford Local Plan' was adopted by the Council on 27 May 2020

10. The Local Plan sets out the aspirations for and the scope of parks and green spaces to be provided in the future, ensuring a consistent approach and that additions are complementary to existing parks, green spaces and waterways. To be successful these place-making ambitions also need to include a commitment to a high quality of management and maintenance of any new and already existing parks, green spaces and waterways.
11. In turn, the spatial elements of the Parks, Green Spaces and Waterways Strategy support the delivery of the Local Plan and can be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

## Strategic aims and policy context

12. The **main focus of the Parks, Green Spaces and Waterways Strategy**, supported by a targeted ‘improvement plan’ and site-specific management plans, is to ensure that:

- a) **A network of attractive, high quality green spaces is provided that are clean, safe and easily accessible to all**
- b) **People can connect with the natural environment through the active use of parks, green spaces and waterways, enjoying positive experiences whilst using them**
- c) **Wildlife, habitats, and landscapes in and around Chelmsford are protected and enhanced**
- d) **Parks, green spaces and waterways are planned and managed in a sustainable way, reducing unnecessary waste and helping to preserve natural resources**

13. Over the years specific policies to guide the planning, development, management, maintenance and use of parks and green spaces have been developed. These are listed at **Appendix A** with the date originally adopted or last reviewed / updated.
14. The development of the Parks, Green Spaces and Waterways Strategy has been informed by a detailed ‘open space assessment’<sup>8</sup> undertaken in 2016 to form part of the Local Plan evidence base. This study examined the levels of open space and sports provision available at the time, with a view towards setting standards for new provision and to identify possible improvements to current green space.

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<sup>8</sup> Chelmsford Open Space, Sports and Recreational Facilities Study 2016-2036 [Ethos Environmental Planning 2016]

15. The study also included a playing pitch and outdoor sports needs assessment<sup>9</sup>, subsequently translated into a Sports and Playing Field Development Plan which was adopted in January 2018 and also forms part of the Local Plan evidence base.
16. Other service development plans exist for Equipped Play Areas, originally adopted in July 2012, but updated in 2019, and Allotments, which was refreshed on 8 December 2021.
17. The Biodiversity Action Plan for Chelmsford originally adopted in February 2013 is due to be replaced by a Local Nature Recovery Strategy in 2022, using the collaborative approach as advocated in the Environment Act 2021.

## Parks and green spaces in and around Chelmsford

18. The scope of the Strategy includes all publicly accessible open space such as parks, playing fields, recreation grounds, sports pitches, residential open spaces, highway verges, local nature reserves, commons, woodlands and conservation sites, public rights of way, allotments, equipped play areas, cemeteries, closed church yards and disused burial grounds, outdoor gyms, waterways and riverside corridors.
19. The City Council is directly responsible for the management and maintenance of a total of 731.40 hectares [1,807.33 acres] of publicly accessible green space, including: -
  - 320 hectares of parks, gardens and amenity areas, including Hylands Park [235ha]
  - 172 hectares of amenity and residential open spaces
  - 93 hectares of sports and playing fields [including 55 football and 8 rugby pitches separate out and 7 cricket tables]
  - 79 hectares of natural green space / common land [including four designated Local Nature Reserves]
  - 69 hectares of woodland
  - 24 hectares of allotment gardens on 23 sites
  - 101 equipped play areas
  - Three bowling greens
  - 12 tennis courts
  - Six outdoor gyms and eight multi-use games areas]
  - Three full sized floodlit 3G sports pitches
  - 8,000+ parkland and street trees
  - 10 hectares of cemetery land used for burials and as garden of remembrance for the crematorium

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<sup>9</sup> Chelmsford Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2036 [Ethos Environmental Planning 2018]

- 5 hectares of closed church yards / disused burial grounds, including the Cathedral grounds
- 10.2 kilometres of rivers and waterways and 23.06 hectares of natural riverside corridors/flood meadows

20. The City Council also maintain 720 kilometres of public rights of way and 70 hectares of highway verges and adjacent land on behalf of Essex County Council.

### How does this compare to what should be provided?

21. The National Planning Policy Framework requires local planning authorities to set out policies to help enable communities to access high quality open spaces and to provide opportunities for sport and recreation that are adequate to meet current needs and likely future demand. The level of provision of parks and green space is mainly determined by the policies and minimum standards for public open space as set out in the Chelmsford Local Plan adopted in May 2020.

22. A summary of the open space standards embodied in the Local Plan are set out in the table below:

Typology	Quantity standards	Access standard
Allotments and community gardens	0.30 ha/1000 population	720 metres or 15-minute walk time
Amenity green space	0.40 ha/1000 population for assessing existing provision Included in natural green space for new provision	480 metres or 10-minute walk time
Parks, sports and recreation grounds (public and private combined)	1.65 ha/1000 population	600 metres or 12-13-minute walk time
Play space (children)	0.05 ha/1000 population	480 metres or 10-minute walk time
Play space (youth)	0.05 ha/1000 population	600 metres or 12-13-minute walk time
Natural green space	1.00 ha/1000 population to include natural and amenity green space for new provision	Accessible Natural Green Space Standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ no person should live more than 300m from their nearest</li> <li>○ area of natural green space</li> <li>○ there should be at least one accessible 20ha site within</li> <li>○ 2km from home</li> <li>○ there should be one</li> </ul>

Typology	Quantity standards	Access standard
		accessible 100ha site within 5km ○ there should be one accessible 500ha site within 10km

23. Overall, the standard in respect of parks, sports grounds, gardens, green corridors, amenity and informal play space is 3.15 hectares per 1,000 head of population. This equates to a total expected open space provision of 566 hectares across Chelmsford compared to 731 hectares currently provided, including Hylands Park.
24. This suggests that open space provision exceeds the standard, but this comparison is distorted somewhat by the inclusion of Hylands Park, which alone accounts for around 30% [235 hectares] of the total open space provision. It could be argued that Hylands Park should not be included in this comparison as it doesn't really fit within the typology of open space that the '3.15 ha standard' is intended to define. If Hylands Park is excluded, there is a deficit in open space provision overall of some 70 hectares.
25. Open space provision is uneven across urban areas, with many older parts of Chelmsford subject to a deficit when assessed locally against the Local Plan standards.
26. The standard in respect of natural and semi natural green space is 1.00 hectares per 1,000 head of population. This equates to a total expected provision of 180 hectares compared to the current provision of 166 hectares [including publicly accessible natural space not in the Council's ownership], indicating a deficit in provision of around 14 hectares [-8.5%].
27. The standard in respect of sports and playing pitches is 1.250 hectares per 1,000 head of population. This equates to a total expected provision of 224 hectares across Chelmsford compared to the current provision of 157 hectares [including all publicly accessible pitches]. This suggests a deficit in provision of 67 hectares [-30%] compared to the Chelmsford Local Plan standard, although this is partly offset by some 'private' sports facilities that are deemed to have sufficient public access to be included in the assessment. The planned housing growth will increase the demand for the provision of additional sports pitches.
28. The standard in respect of allotments is 0.300 hectares per 1,000 head of population. This equates to a total expected provision of 54 hectares compared to the current provision of 44 hectares [including sites provided by local town and parish councils] indicating a deficit in provision of 10 hectares [-19%]. This deficit is most apparent in north and east Chelmsford and in South Woodham Ferrers.
29. The standards for provision of local equipped play space were examined and set as part of the equipped play area review conducted in 2012. These standards, for space and

travel distance, are adopted in the Local Plan; the space standard totalling 0.1 hectares per 1000 population.

30. However, equipped play areas are provided using a hierarchy of neighbourhood and local play spaces, the geographical distribution dictated by catchment area and to avoid users having to cross physical barriers such as main roads, railway lines etc. Following a rationalisation of equipped play areas, the provision of play areas generally meets the criteria set. There is an ongoing Improvement Plan to refurbish equipped play areas so that they meet the specified qualitative standards.

## Use of parks, green spaces and waterways

31. Parks and green spaces in Chelmsford are extensively used for a wide variety of purposes. In addition to general recreation, they provide walking and cycling routes, are used for play, for people to experience and appreciate the natural environment or simply to relax in and enjoy an attractive space.
32. . Surveys have consistently shown that over 90% of residents use parks and green spaces in Chelmsford in some way and at some time. More than three million visits to the main parks are recorded each year, with many more using other green spaces and river corridors for informal recreation and quiet contemplation, but at present unrecorded.
33. There are around 7,000 sports pitch hires in Chelmsford each year, equating to over 400,000 individual uses. The majority of users play on the artificial pitches and courts followed by people playing football, rugby and then cricket on grass pitches, together with a variety of other fitness and recreational activities.
34. Almost 100 events take place in parks and on green spaces each year, both community-based and commercial, ranging from large-scale music festivals to fundraising events and local fairs, beer festivals and health walks to outdoor theatre.
35. Well maintained, accessible parks, green spaces and waterways are highly valued by local residents and always considered important to the 'quality of life' in the local area. They are considered to be an important factor in making Chelmsford a good place to live.
36. There are high levels of satisfaction recorded with the provision of parks and green spaces, with 78% very or fairly satisfied in the latest survey in October 2019, with only 14% dissatisfied in some way. This is gradually improving over time.
37. At one time simply appreciated for their visual appearance and attractiveness, as a nice place to spend time, the benefits of parks and green spaces are now considered to be far reaching.



38. In the most recent survey about the value of green spaces in Essex<sup>10</sup>:

- 99% of the respondents agreed that good quality green spaces make an area a better place to live
- 98% agreed that being able to access nature and green space is important
- 98% agreed that it was important that nature and biodiversity in the locality was protected and preserved

39. In national surveys 91% of those responding believe that parks and green spaces significantly improve the quality of life for people locally<sup>11</sup>. Since the coronavirus pandemic, 87% of people consider that visiting local green and natural spaces has become even more important to their wellbeing.

40. Active community engagement in caring for and maintaining parks, green spaces and waterways is achieved through a comprehensive garden, 'estate' and conservation volunteer programme, through friends' groups and via 'Love Your Chelmsford' community projects. There are around 950 active volunteers, typically 'working' over 13,000 hours each year, with an equivalent value in excess of £180,000<sup>12</sup>. Feedback about the programme is generally very positive, reflected in high retention rates of volunteers.

## Approach to management and maintenance

41. Chelmsford parks and green spaces generally have a good reputation for being sensitively managed and well maintained to ensure they are fit for purpose and suitable for their intended use.

42. Diverse maintenance regimes and management practices are in place, ranging from very intensive maintenance required for fine turf areas such as bowling greens and cricket squares to the relatively low intervention maintenance regimes associated with local nature reserves and wildlife areas, and everything in between.

43. About 100 hectares of grassland is maintained as spring and summer meadows. Further diversification has been achieved by introducing a grazing regime<sup>13</sup> as part of the management regime for the Widford Meadows in Hylands Park.

44. A new City-wide policy and approach for creating and managing species-rich grassland was adopted in November 2021 and will be progressively implemented over the next two to three years.

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<sup>10</sup> Research and Citizen Insight [Essex County Council Policy Unit July 2021]

<sup>11</sup> Urban Green Nation [CABE Space March 2010]

<sup>12</sup> Using the national volunteer hourly value calculator in 2019 of £13.70

<sup>13</sup> A Red Poll beef herd through the Essex Grazing Project

45. Comprehensive site-specific management plans are in place for all major parks and green spaces. These are listed in **Appendix B** with the site area, the date when the management plan was last updated and the 'Green Flag' status of the site.
46. In 2021, 17 parks and green spaces were accredited under the Green Flag scheme, three of which were also recognised as Green Heritage sites, the most in the east of England. In addition, one site has a Green Flag Community Award recognising the efforts of the community group and volunteers who manage and maintain the green space at Marconi Ponds.
47. The Green Flag Award®<sup>14</sup> scheme has been used proactively for many years to improve standards and provide an independent assessment of the quality of service and maintenance provided. The Green Flag scheme recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world.
48. Using this accreditation scheme has helped ensure that everyone living in the City Council area has access to green space, irrespective of where they live and that these spaces are appropriately managed and maintained to meet the needs of the communities that they serve.
49. Chelmsford City Council also participates in the Keep Britain Tidy Group national 'service-wide' quality accreditation scheme for the management of parks and green spaces. A pilot scheme to date, the intention is that this will be gradually rolled-out across the country.
50. There is growing concern about the need to adopt more sustainable management practices. The Council has a policy to restrict the use of pesticides and herbicides to a few limited circumstances, where alternatives are not viable. The use of peat in the Council's grounds maintenance operations is to be eliminated. There is an ongoing programme to decarbonise vehicles and equipment. Small handheld tools are already electric powered.

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<sup>14</sup> Green Flag Award® scheme is currently managed by Keep Britain Tidy under license from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government [now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities]

## Improvement planning

51. An Improvement Plan is in place to support the delivery of the Parks, Green Spaces and Waterways Strategy. The initial Plan is set out at **Appendix C** and will be periodically updated during the lifetime of the Strategy.
52. The current priorities for action are grouped as follows:
  - I. **Addressing the deficit in the provision of open space and improving access to natural and semi natural green space as identified in the most recent Open Space, Sports and Recreational Facilities Study**
  - II. **Expanding the 'green infrastructure' of Chelmsford and surrounding areas to address the climate and ecological emergency and to protect and enhance natural habitats and increase biodiversity**
  - III. **Undertaking a greening programme to significantly increase the amount of woodland and the proportion of tree cover in Chelmsford and surrounding areas**
  - IV. **Improving the environmental quality, attractiveness and recreational potential of rivers and waterways and associated green corridors**
  - V. **Expanding the range of facilities and opportunities available in parks and green spaces to encourage people to engage in play, recreation and physical activity**
  - VI. **Ensuring that new sports and playing fields, equipped play areas and a range of recreation spaces are integrated into all new development in accordance with the adopted Sports and Playing Field Development Plan and the Playground Development Plan**
  - VII. **Creating new allotment sites, leisure gardens, orchards and community growing spaces**
  - VIII. **Improving the understanding of how parks, green spaces and waterways are used, including opinion and satisfaction surveys about current provision, to inform their future planning and management**
  - IX. **Evaluating the qualitative and quantitative value and benefits of parks, green spaces and waterways to local communities, to the local economy, and in respect of their contribution to mitigating the effects of climate change**
  - X. **Improving management practices and quality standards and promoting community involvement in the care and maintenance of parks, green spaces and waterways**

## Appendix A – Policies relating to parks, green spaces and waterways

Public open spaces policy [concerning the conditions for the protection, acquisition, adoption, transfer and disposal of public open space] – agreed at Cabinet on 25 January 2022

Policy for creating and managing species-rich grassland – adopted in November 2021

Tree management policy – last updated on 29 September 2021

Policy for the provision of equipped play areas – last updated in July 2019

Policy for the adoption and management of closed churchyards and disused burial grounds – adopted in 2019

Policy for events in parks and green spaces – last updated on 28 April 2021, with an addition in relation to community groups added on 26 May 2021

Policy for the use of pesticides [including herbicides] on Chelmsford City Council land – last reviewed on 8 December 2021

Policy for the use of drones and model aircraft in parks and green spaces or other Council owned land – updated on 28 April 2021

Policy on metal detecting on City Council land – adopted in August 2018, updated on 6 April 2022

Policy for lighting in parks and green spaces – last reviewed on 2 March 2020 (PVD to source copy)

Policy for cycle parking in parks and green spaces – adopted on 8 April 2021 (PVD to source copy)

Policy for use of volunteers in parks and green spaces – adopted in July 2009

## Appendix B – Site-specific Management Plans

Location	Site area	Management Plan	Green Flag status
Andrews Park	4.56 ha	Andrews Park Maintenance & Management Plan 2020-2024	Green Flag since 2020
Admirals Park, Tower Gardens and adjoining West Park [includes heritage specific management plan]	27.47 ha	Admirals Park, Tower Gardens & West Park Maintenance & Management Plan 2020-2024	Green Flag & Green Heritage since 2005
Beaulieu, Boleyn Gardens and The Grand Vista	7.33 ha	Beaulieu Park Recreation Ground Boleyn Gardens and The Grand Vista Maintenance & Management Plan 2020-2024	Green Flag since 2004
Central Park	14.34 ha	Central Park Management and Maintenance Plan 2022-2026	Green Flag since 2011
Chelmsford Cemetery and Crematorium	10.09 ha	Cemetery & Crematorium Garden Grounds Maintenance 2019-2023	Green Flag since 2015
Coronation Park	5.83 ha	Coronation Park Management and Maintenance Plan 2018-2022	Green Flag since 2008
Chelmer Park and Jubilee Park	20.60 ha	Chelmer Park and Jubilee Park Management & Maintenance Plan 2019-2024	Green Flag since 2006
Hylands Estate	234.62 ha	Hylands Estate Management and Maintenance Plan 2018-2022  Includes heritage specific management plan	Green Flag & Green Heritage since 2007
Lionmede Recreation Ground	1.94 ha	Lionmede Recreation Ground Management and Maintenance Plan 2018-2022	Green Flag since 2013
Melbourne Park	21.73 ha	Melbourne Park Management and Maintenance Plan 2020-2024	Green Flag since 2010
Oaklands Park	4.88 ha	Oaklands Park Management and Maintenance Plan 2022-	Green Flag & Green Heritage

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Location	Site area	Management Plan	Green Flag status
		2026 Includes heritage specific management plan	since 2004
Saltcoats Park & Compass Gardens	14.27 ha	Saltcoats Park and Compass Gardens Management and Maintenance Plan 2019-2023	Green Flag since 2009
Springfield Hall Park	15.44 ha	Springfield Hall Park Management and Maintenance Plan 2020-2024	Green Flag since 2016
Chelmer Valley LNR	17.6 ha	Chelmer Valley Local Nature Reserve Management Plan 2021-2026	Green Flag since 2017
Galleywood Common LNR	46.73 ha	Galleywood Common Management Plan 2019-2025	Green Flag since 2021
Frankland Fields LNR	2.9 ha	Frankland Fields Management Plan 2020-2025	Green Flag since 2021
Brook End Gardens and Chancellor Park	8.50 ha	Chancellor Park & Brook End Gardens Management and Maintenance Plan 2018-2022	Green Flag since 2012
Marconi Ponds LNR (Friends Group Pennant)	1.07 ha	Marconi Ponds Local Nature Reserve Management Plan 2020-2025 (online)	Green Pennant since 2016

## Parks, Green Spaces and Waterways Strategy – Improvement Plan

Action ref	Action					Progress summary	Actual start date	Estimated due date	Completed date
I.	Addressing the deficit in the provision of open space and improving access to natural and semi natural green space								
OCOPE2.3 CaEE 7c	Create a new natural open space and country park as part of the North East Chelmsford growth area					Policy framework is within the adopted Chelmsford Local Plan 2012-2036. A specific requirement will be identified in emerging site masterplan and planning applications for the development. The new Country Park is expected to be started towards the latter stages of the development	1/05/2020	31/12/2036	
II.	Expanding the 'green infrastructure' to address the climate and ecological emergency and to protect and enhance natural habitats and increase biodiversity								
OCOPE2.1 CaEE 7a	Establish a continuous, fully connected green wedge through the Chelmer River Valley north of Chelmsford City Centre					Policy framework is within the adopted Chelmsford Local Plan 2012-2036. Specific enhancements will be identified in the emerging North East Chelmsford Garden Community site masterplan and planning applications. Improving connectivity within and through the green wedge will be undertaken alongside work on the North East Chelmsford Garden Community project, which is expected to commence in 2022/23,	1/05/2020	31/12/2036	

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Action ref	Action					Progress summary	Actual start date	Estimated due date	Completed date
						as well as through the emerging Broomfield Neighbourhood Plan			
OCOPE2.2 CaEE 7b	Establish a new Chelmer River Valley green wedge to the east of Chelmsford City Centre					Linked to action CaEE 7f, establishing the 'country park' associated with the East Chelmsford growth area is fundamental to realising a fully connected green wedge to the east of the City Centre	1/07/2020	30/03/2026	
CaEE 7f	Create a new 'country park' on the water-meadows at Sandon as part of the development associated with the East Chelmsford growth area					Preliminary discussions have taken place with the developer for the East Chelmsford growth area to ensure that the specific requirements for the 'country park' are built into the master plan for the site which will inform any subsequent application for planning consent. This will deliver the necessary infrastructure and make the land available to be adopted as green space	1/07/2020	30/03/2026	
	Implement the new policy on 'managing species-rich grassland' adopted by the Council in November 2021					Communication plan to be developed, areas selected and plotted to inform grounds staff in preparation for implementation in April 2022	1/04/2022		
	Create new wildflower meadows and habitat areas of differing scales at selected locations as part of the programme to enhance wildlife					For example Potter's Meadow' at Galleywood Common, and wildflower plug planting in Springfield Hall Park linking into Chelmer valley LNR/receptor field,	1/4/2022	1/4/2025	



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Action ref	Action					Progress summary	Actual start date	Estimated due date	Completed date
	habitats/linked mosaics and increase species diversity.					Compass Gardens linking into wilder SSSI and RAMSA sites, etc.			
	Create naturalised bulb planting areas and associated wildflower areas of differing scales at selected locations as part of the programme to enhance wildlife habitats/linked mosaics and increase species diversity.					For example Central Park linking to Marconi Ponds LNR, Springfield Green, etc.	1/4/2022	1/4/2025	
OCOPE2.4 OCOPE2.5 CaEE 7d CaEE 7e	Work with Essex County Council, Essex Wildlife Trust, statutory bodies, landowners and community organisations to develop a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Chelmsford in order to enhance sites designated for nature conservation and other wildlife-rich habitats and green corridors and to improve the landscape's resilience to climate change					The use of Local Nature Recovery Strategies and the creation of effective delivery partnerships are now embodied in the Environment Act given royal ascent on 9 November 2021, although this has been somewhat delayed due to the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic. It is anticipated that there might be some funding available for delivery	1/05/2021	31/03/2023	
III.	Undertaking a 'greening programme' to significantly increase the amount of woodland and the proportion of tree cover in Chelmsford and surrounding areas								
OCOPE1.1 CaEE 6a	Put in place a sustained medium-term mass tree planting and woodland creation programme resulting in the planting of at least 148,000 additional trees / create 71					Programme ongoing, some of the community involvement in the tree planting has had to be curtailed due to Covid restrictions. By end of February 2021 [end of the current planting season] 47,000 new trees	1/11/2019	31/03/2030	Ongoing

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Action ref	Action					Progress summary	Actual start date	Estimated due date	Completed date
	hectares of woodland to achieve tree cover of at least 20% in the Chelmsford area by 2030					will have been planted			
IV. Improving the environmental quality, attractiveness and recreational potential of rivers and waterways and associated green corridors									
OCOPF3.2 CaEE 8b	Examine options to improve navigation on the rivers and waterways and review current and future flood prevention measures [including devices to retain water in the City Centre all year round]					The initial focus of the Chelmsford Waterways Working Group during 2020 has been to develop plans and test the feasibility of the construction of a replacement structure for the so-called automatic flood gates, to retain water in the City Centre rivers and improve navigation on the River Chelmer. An options appraisal was considered by the WG on 22 January 2020 and the recommendations endorsed by the Policy Board on 5 March 2020. Following approval at Cabinet on 8 September 2020, further detailed survey work and a second stage feasibility study was commissioned in December 2020. This work is currently underway which will provide more detailed scheme proposals sufficient for consideration to be given to including the scheme in the Council's capital programme when next reviewed in summer 2021	1/10/2019	31/03/2024	

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Action ref	Action					Progress summary	Actual start date	Estimated due date	Completed date
OCOPF3.3 CaEE 8c	Consider opportunities to extend and improve green spaces adjoining the rivers and waterways, including options for greening of the canalised sections of the river to improve its appearance and attractiveness					Linked to action CaEE 8a	6/06/2019	31/03/2023	
OCOPF3.4 CaEE 8d	Promote projects and activities that enhance the habitat, ecological and biodiversity value of the river corridors					<p>Application to declare Local Nature Reserve status for Admirals Park submitted December 2020, Natural England have approved the application and draft management plan. Public consultation will be organised in early 2021 prior to formal declaration of the LNR by the City Council in June 2021.</p> <p>Application to declare Local Nature Reserve status for Frankland Fields submitted October 2021, Natural England have approved the application and draft management plan. Public consultation completed. Formal declaration of the LNR by the City Council in June 2022.</p>	6/12/2020	30/06/2022	
OCOPF3.5 CaEE 8e	Consider opportunities that could be taken to extend and improve the network of riverside footpaths and cycleways					The Improving Movement Around the City Working Group (IMAC) was established by the Chelmsford Policy Board in January 2020 to examine proposals that will improve movement around the	1/05/2020	1/01/2022	

## Parks, Green Spaces and Waterways Strategy

Action ref	Action					Progress summary	Actual start date	Estimated due date	Completed date
						<p>City and have the potential to reduce congestion and journey times, encourage more sustainable travel choices and help improve air quality. The emerging Sustainable Transport and Parking Strategy will make proposals to improve the provision for safe cycling and walking in and around the City in line with the Local Plan.</p> <p>Engagement with the Waterways Working Group, to maximise the recreational and travel potential of the river corridors, will take place during the development of the Strategy</p>			
OCOPH3.1 CaEE 10a	Implement a programme of catchment improvements and natural flood management initiatives as part of wider Chelmsford Flood Resilience Partnership Scheme, also providing new habitat and environmental improvements to the green infrastructure of Chelmsford						tbc		
V.	Expanding the range of facilities and opportunities available in parks and green spaces to encourage people to engage in play, recreation, and physical activity								
OCOP I4.2 HaW1.12b	Complete the phased implementation of the Playground Development Plan					Prepare the next phasing of the Equipped play development for 2023/24. plan. Implement 2022/23 programme. Expand further youth facilities such as informal	April 2022		

## Parks, Green Spaces and Waterways Strategy

Action ref	Action					Progress summary	Actual start date	Estimated due date	Completed date
						basketball courts, table tennis facilities, outdoor gyms and youth shelters			
	Review the policy for events taking place in parks and green spaces to ensure that a balanced programme of events is hosted that promotes access, reflects the diverse interests local communities and is complementary to the normal everyday use of these spaces								
	Chelmer Park, Saltcoats Park toilets refurbishments as part of the wider refurbishment of sports pavilion, etc.					Part completed Saltcoats Park, toilet refurbishment, Chelmer Park toilets planned refurbishment in 2022	1/4/2022	1/4/2024	
	Encourage a conservation volunteer group to get involved in the care and maintenance of Admirals Park LNR areas, promoted via LYC website.					Early consultation underway to establish group and first year activity programme under way and to be executed as part of the wider parks volunteering programme.	1/4/2022	1/4/2023	
	Encourage a 'garden volunteer group' to get involved in the care and maintenance of Compass Gardens and other green spaces in South Woodham Ferrers, promoted via LYC website.					Early consultation underway to develop a group and first year activity programme planned and to be executed as part of the wider garden and parks volunteering programme	1/4/2022	1/4/2026	
	Encourage a conservation					Early consultation underway to	1/4/2022	1/4/2023	

## Parks, Green Spaces and Waterways Strategy

Action ref	Action					Progress summary	Actual start date	Estimated due date	Completed date
	volunteer group to get involved in the care and maintenance of John Shennan Field., promoted via LYC website.					establish group and first year activity programme planned and to be executed as part of the wider parks volunteering programme.			
OCOP I1.1	Explore options to 'restore' or bring back into some form of use the walled, former kitchen, garden at Hylands Park to further increase the attraction of Hylands House and Park as a key leisure and recreation destination in the region					Outline concept discussed with Heritage Lottery Fund. Two stage bid process required. Currently no suitable schemes available as HLF are focussed on Heritage recovery. Position to be reviewed during 2022.		31/12/2022	
OCOP I3.1	Review future use of Sandford Mill and surrounding land. For example commercial use of the Engine House with improved visitor facilities providing the focus for the wider recreational use of the planned Chelmer East green wedge so that it can operate as an all-year-round destination					Linked to the preparation of the master plan for East Chelmsford Strategic Growth Area (OCOP A7), which should provide some of the supporting infrastructure [new access road, car park and contribution to a new visitor centre] for the resource centre as part of planning obligations for the wider development. The development potential of the Sandford Mill site itself is being examined by a project group reporting to the Waterways Working Group. Initial workshop sessions were held in 2019/20. A site appraisal examining the development opportunities has been undertaken by external property consultants, but further		30/03/2027	

## Parks, Green Spaces and Waterways Strategy

Action ref	Action					Progress summary	Actual start date	Estimated due date	Completed date
						work is temporarily on hold due to other priorities arising from the Covid-19 outbreak. This will also allow the extent of the planning obligations to be confirmed			
VI.	Ensuring that new sports and playing fields, equipped play areas and a range of recreation spaces are integrated into all new development								
OCOP I5.4 HaW 1.3d	Complete strategic sport and recreation development at Runwell Sports & Social Club					Pitch improvements completed using contributions secured via s.106 agreement relating to neighbouring St Luke's development. Planning consent secured for further improvements to on-site sport and recreation facilities, to also be operated as community use facilities by Runwell Sports & Social Club. Further contributions to achieve the s.106 requirements will be released on a phased basis as the site development plan is finalised. Additional external grant funding opportunities are being explored and assessed.	April 2018	30/3/2023	
	Replace existing tarmac ball courts at Beaulieu Park Sports and Recreation Ground with 3G artificial grass courts including ball stop fence and upgraded flood lighting					£90,000 allocated in the capital programme in 2022/23 [partly offset by £63,000 Sect 106 contribution]			
	Oaklands Park - replace disused tarmac tennis courts with new					£91,000 allocated in the capital programme in 2022/23 [partly			

## Parks, Green Spaces and Waterways Strategy

Action ref	Action					Progress summary	Actual start date	Estimated due date	Completed date
	multisport area					offset by £44,000 [Sect 106 contribution] NB former tarmac tennis courts are now unusable, following the site being used as a site compound for the Museum refurbishment			
	Add facilities for cricket and develop new sports pavilion at Beaulieu Park Sports Ground					£477,000 allocated in the capital programme in January 2019 with delegation to spend further S106 contributions when received. Total scheme costs expected to be £1.311m			
	Replacement of Melbourne Park changing rooms and pavilion, floodlighting and resurfacing of the multisport courts					Included in Sports and Playing Field development plan and local development master plans, but not yet funded [anticipated cost £1.2m]			
OCOPA8.1 OCOP I4.1 HaW1.12a	Construction of a new sports ground as part of the Warren Farm Development [Growth Area 1 – Site 2 West Chelmsford]					Development should provide 9-hectare sports area sufficient to accommodate 8 football pitches, 1 cricket table and outfield including artificial wicket, sports pavilion including sports club rooms, toilets and 9 dual [for both teams] changing rooms with 200 parking spaces  Further direct investment of around £450,00 to £550,000 will be required to provide a full-sized floodlit artificial pitch to complement other provision on site. However, this doesn't address			



## Parks, Green Spaces and Waterways Strategy

Action ref	Action					Progress summary	Actual start date	Estimated due date	Completed date
						the remaining deficit in sports provision in the area, which equates to a further five sports pitches and associated infrastructure			
OCOPA5.2 OCOP I4.1 HaW1.12a	Construction of a new sports ground as part of the North Chelmsford development [Growth Area 2 – Site 4]					Development should provide 11.6-hectare sports facility sufficient to accommodate 8 football pitches and 1 rugby pitch, 1 cricket table and outfield including artificial wicket, a full-sized accredited floodlit artificial 3G pitch, floodlit self-contained block of 8 netball courts, sports pavilion including sports club rooms, toilets and 12 dual [for both teams] changing rooms and 250 parking spaces. Further direct investment of around of £1.8m will be required to achieve this			
OCOPA6.1 OCOP I4.1 HaW1.12a	Construction of a new sports ground as part of the South and East Chelmsford development [Growth Area 3 – Site 7 South Woodham Ferrers]					Development should provide 4.4-hectare sports facility sufficient to accommodate 4 rugby pitches, sports pavilion including sports club rooms, toilets and 4 dual [for both teams] changing rooms and 120 parking spaces. Further direct investment around of £1.15m will be required to achieve this			
OCOP I4.1 HaW1.12a	Reconfigure Saltcoats Park and Compass Gardens sports areas					Rationalise existing provision and develop new / improved cricket			

## Parks, Green Spaces and Waterways Strategy

Action ref	Action					Progress summary	Actual start date	Estimated due date	Completed date
	to focus on football and cricket [following the construction of the additional sports ground as part of Growth Area 3]					and football facilities on existing site including a new sports pavilion and changing areas. Direct investment in the order of £1.2 to £1.5m will be required			
	Re-develop existing tennis courts at Tower Gardens and Oaklands park to provide floodlit multi-use games area					To be provided on the site of the existing tennis courts – will allow use for alternative activities e.g., roller hockey, 5-a-side football, informal sports, as well as tennis. Direct investment in the order of around £120,000 and £95,000 will be required			
	Improve tennis facilities at Lionmede Recreation Ground to provide re-surfaced floodlit courts, new 'clubhouse' etc.					'Shared' bowls/tennis pavilion enhancements to car parking. Direct investment in the order of around £325,000 will be required			
	Provide informal use table tennis facilities at Boleyn Gardens and Chelmer Village Green in collaboration with Springfield Parish Council.					Explore proposals with Springfield Parish Council flowing the cofounding model of the recently installed Outdoor Gym at Bolen Gardens	1/3/2022	1/3/2023	
	Improve football facilities at Springfield Hall Park. Ground development plans to be undertaken by Springfield Football Club. A further £1.2m to include a potential new 3G full sized pitch location.								

## Parks, Green Spaces and Waterways Strategy

Action ref	Action					Progress summary	Actual start date	Estimated due date	Completed date
VII.	Creating new allotment sites, leisure gardens, orchards and community growing spaces								
	Provide additional allotment gardens to meet the deficit in north and east Chelmsford					Emerging master plan			
	Provide additional allotment gardens to meet the deficit in South Woodham Ferrers					Additional provision to be secured through housing growth area 3 in accordance with emerging master plan			
	Facilitate the establishment of and support the ongoing activities of a 'community growing space' at Avon Road					Proposal received from Abberton Rural Training [ART] to set up a community allotment base to offer wider volunteering and training opportunities to a wide variety of participants with learning difficulties, mental health conditions and other complex needs.	1//4/2022	1/4/2023	
	Community orchard initiatives to create community and volunteering based opportunities for public involvement.					For example, existing community orchards at Marsh Farm, Chignal Smealy; and planned Community Orchard at Waterhouse Lane Allotments.	1/4/2022	1/4/2026	
VIII.	Improving the understanding of how parks, green spaces and waterways are used, including opinion and satisfaction surveys about current provision to inform their future planning and management								
	Monitor footfall and undertake analysis of visitor behaviour in the main parks and green spaces to inform the planning, development and management					Place Informatics commissioned to provide location data to allow footfall to be monitored, as well as information on dwell time, visit frequency, catchment etc to			

## Parks, Green Spaces and Waterways Strategy

Action ref	Action					Progress summary	Actual start date	Estimated due date	Completed date
	of these spaces in the future					analysis visitor behaviour - this will cover the 23 primary parks and green spaces in Chelmsford Vehicle counters to be retained at Hylands Park replaced			
	Undertake a programme of visitor surveys to gain feedback from people using the facilities and services in parks and green spaces and assess the satisfaction with the standards of care and maintenance achieved					Methodologies to measure public satisfaction and footfall are due to be integrated into Green Flag accreditation scheme in the future	ongoing	ongoing	
IX.	Evaluating the qualitative and quantitative value and benefits of parks, green spaces and waterways to local communities, to the local economy and in respect of their contribution to mitigating the effects of climate change								
	Building on research undertaken on a national basis, commission an academic study to assess the contribution made by parks and green spaces in terms of health and wellbeing benefits to the catchment area of Chelmsford					Need to source an appropriately qualified partner to undertake work and secure funding			
	Undertake an assessment of the amount of CO <sub>2</sub> removed / offset by parks and green spaces in Chelmsford and surrounding areas each year					Need to source an appropriately qualified partner to undertake work and secure funding			
X.	Improving management practices and quality standards and promoting community involvement in the care and maintenance of parks,								

## Parks, Green Spaces and Waterways Strategy

Action ref	Action					Progress summary	Actual start date	Estimated due date	Completed date
<b>green spaces and waterways</b>									
OCOPH2 HaW5.1j	Consider the introduction of a Public Space Protection Order for parks and green spaces to help tackle anti-social behaviour and regulate the way certain activities take place in these areas								
	Promote the UK Government's Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs and the Professional Dog Walkers' Guidelines, published by the Pet Industry Federation and endorsed by the RSPCA and Dogs Trust								
	Improve the protection of green spaces most at risk of from occupation by unauthorised encampments								
	Extend CCTV coverage in Admirals Park, Marconi Ponds and the Bunny Walks as part of the wider community safety, crime prevention programme					Funding secured for improved CCTV coverage of Bunny walks as part of the Safer Streets Project Funding secured for extended CCTV coverage in Admirals Park and Marconi Ponds through Home Office GRIP (Serious Violence) Funding		31/03/2022  31/03/2022	
	Continue to proactively use the 'Green Flag' quality accreditation scheme – the					All Chelmsford's major parks and green spaces [currently 17 locations] have Green Flag		Ongoing	

## Parks, Green Spaces and Waterways Strategy

Action ref	Action					Progress summary	Actual start date	Estimated due date	Completed date
	<p>benchmark national standard for Parks and Green spaces in the UK – as a method to independently evaluate and measure the quality of individual parks and green spaces</p> <p>The Green Flag scheme, amongst other things, encourages environmental sustainability, access for all, care for local heritage and community involvement as well recognising high standards of management and maintenance</p>					<p>accreditations ensuring that residents have access to a high-quality green space in the vicinity of their homes</p>			
	<p>In concert with individual site accreditations use the Green Flag ‘Service Accreditation’ Scheme to assess the performance and effectiveness of organisational and administrative arrangements, such as planning, management and maintenance practices across the whole service, considered to be essential to support the provision of high-quality green spaces</p>					<p>The City Council has been helping to develop a pilot scheme for a ‘service-wide quality accreditation’ scheme, used to improve service standards and drive performance improvements. This scheme is due to be rolled out nationally.</p>		Ongoing	
*	<p>Review and update signage, information and map panels on all Green Flag sites</p>					<p>Five-year programme – works required and timings outlined in the individual site management</p>	2022	2027	

## Parks, Green Spaces and Waterways Strategy

Action ref	Action					Progress summary	Actual start date	Estimated due date	Completed date
						plans			
*	Review conservation and management practices on all sites in order to promote / increase species diversity					Five-year programme – works required and timings outlined in the individual site management plans	2022	2027	
*	Undertake survey and review of all park furniture, benches, picnic tables, donated seats etc.					Compile replacement programme and update seat donation / sponsorship policy	2022	2027	
	Investigate and implement wider accreditation standards for Bereavement Services [Cemetery and Crematorium].					Participate in external ICCM and FCBA audits and Implement action plan improvements. For example, the FCBA 5 yearly inspection [last undertaken in November 2021]	2022	2024	
	Minimise and eliminate the use of peat and pesticides in City Council operations					Policy on the use of peat and pesticides implemented.	April 2022		
	Fully adopt the Council’s policy on single use plastics for all activities taking place in parks and green spaces					Part of the “Extend recycling on go” campaign in parks and open spaces	1/4/2022	1/4/2024	
OCOPG3.2 CaEE9b	Implement programme to transition vehicles, plant and equipment used on grounds maintenance activities to low emission or ultra-low emission alternatives in accordance with the Council’s Climate and Ecological Emergency Action					Part of the vehicle, plant and machinery replacement programme; for example, 2 stroke replacement with battery powered equipment, small parks vehicles electrification, etc.	April 2021	ongoing	

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Action ref	Action					Progress summary	Actual start date	Estimated due date	Completed date
	Plan								
	Central Park Lake edge works; including replacement of water aerators and water margin planting					Final phase of lake edge to be installed and Replacement aerator Planting and natural edge installation £63,000	April 2022  June 2022 Autumn 2022		
	Restoration of the Hanbury Memorial Garden and Lily Pond at Hylands Pleasure Gardens, part funded by Friends of Hylands					Hanbury Memorial Garden restored and opened to the public in summer 2021; Lily Pond planting and soft landscaping to be completed as a garden volunteering project by summer 2022	1/4/2018	1//9/2022	