

**Canterbury District Local Plan Review
Public Examination 2014**

Topic Paper no 4

Open Space and Green Infrastructure



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LOCAL PLAN STRATEGY

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Paper sets out the context for the approach of Canterbury City Council for the protection, enhancement and provision of Open Space and Green Infrastructure in the development of the Canterbury District draft Local Plan 2014. It provides background information to the text, policies and allocations in the draft Local Plan.

1.2 The paper explains the national and local planning policy context for the draft Local Plan and policies. Government policy gives priority to the protection and enhancement of open space provision and the draft Local Plan reflects this. The support and commitment to improving the quality and quantity of open space provision in the Canterbury District is also illustrated in a number of other Council plans and strategies. The Council's vision is to develop an interconnected network of diverse, high quality open spaces which meet the needs of local people and make a significant contribution to raising the quality of life for all residents and visitors to the Canterbury district, the Local Plan and the Open Space Strategy aims to achieve this.

1.3 The Open Space Strategy, which was adopted as a Council strategy in 2009, compliments and supports the National Planning Policy Framework, Corporate Plan, draft Local Plan, draft Transport Strategy, emerging Green Infrastructure Strategy and Environment Strategy. The Open Space Strategy is currently under review and will be updated in line with the adoption of the

Local Plan as set out in Paragraph 11.2 of the Draft Local Plan 2014. A copy of the draft Open Space Strategy is included in the Examination papers (CDLP 9.3)

2.0 Context and Description of the Canterbury District.

- 2.1 The definition of public open space is set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as being “any land laid out as a public garden, or used for the purposes of public recreation, or land which is a disused burial ground.” Open Space provides for a wide range of formal and informal, passive and active leisure, sport, recreational and play activity and visual amenity.
- 2.2 Green Infrastructure is an all- encompassing term to describe both natural and man-made urban and rural green spaces. Natural England define green infrastructure as “a strategically planned and delivered network of high quality green spaces and other environmental features”. Green Infrastructure is the network of green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect villages, towns and cities.

The Canterbury District

- 2.3 The District of Canterbury has an abundance of diverse quality public open space and green infrastructure that is used by local residents and visitors to the Canterbury District.

- 2.4 The District comprises the historic city of Canterbury, two seaside towns in Herne Bay and Whitstable plus the rural villages set in a landscape that includes The Blean Woodland, the Kent Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Stour valley.
- 2.5 Canterbury District has 15 nationally important Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), East Blean Woods, Larkey Valley Wood, Yorkletts Bank, West Blean and Thornden Woods, Stodmarsh, Ileden and Oxenden Woods, Tankerton Slopes, Thanet Coast, Church Woods, Sturry Pit, Preston Marshes, Lynsore Bottom, Ellenden Wood, Chequers and Old Park, and The Swale. Three of which are internationally important as designated Ramsar and Special Protection Area sites (Thanet Coast, Stodmarsh, and The Swale) and two Special Area of Conservation sites (Stodmarsh and Blean). Stodmarsh and Blean Woods are also designated National Nature Reserves. In addition, there are a 49 Local Wildlife Sites of county importance which fall partly or wholly within the Canterbury District Area.

Canterbury

- 2.6 Canterbury City contains a World Heritage Site which includes Canterbury Cathedral, St Augustine's Abbey and St Martin's Church, also many listed buildings, a number of which are Grade 1 listed. The City includes a network of green spaces, with Dane John and Westgate Gardens as two principal

historic parks and has significant recreational space at Thanington, Victoria Recreation, St Stephens and the Sturry Road Community Park.

- 2.7 The Stour River provides a thread “West to East” through the city of Canterbury.

Herne Bay

- 2.8 The Victorians developed Herne Bay as a seaside resort. Within the town, the Memorial Park is a large central multi-purpose park, in addition the seafront and beach are highly valued by residents and visitors alike as shown through the recent consultations. On the fringe of Herne Bay there are three significant pieces of open space in Burton Downs, Hampton Pier and Reculver Country Park. In 2012 the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Coastal Park was adopted from Hampton Pier through to Reculver, this highlights the recreational value and importance of the coastline.

Whitstable

- 2.9 Whitstable retains its distinctive character as a small fishing and sailing town. It is a tourist destination, especially in the summer months. The main town park is Whitstable Castle, which was upgraded in 2010. In 2012 the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Coastal Park was adopted, this includes an area from the base of Whitstable Castle along the Tankerton Slopes to Swalecliffe,

which emphasises that the beach and semi natural areas are special pieces of public open space.

- 2.10 In Whitstable there are three significant areas of recreational space: Cornwallis Circle, Columbia Avenue, and Westmeads Recreation Ground. Duncan Down is a Local Wildlife Site and highly valued by local people as shown through recent consultations. The area consists of a large parcel of semi natural open space on the urban fringe of Whitstable, it is recognised for its recreational and amenity value.
- 2.11 In the rural areas most villages contain a central open space, village green or recreation area, which provide opportunities for recreation sport and play. There is access to many areas of woodland, marshland, local nature reserves, general open space and a network of Public Rights of Way.
- 2.12 The District contains extensive woodland such as Bakers Wood, The Denge Wood whilst The Blean Woodland is of national importance due to its ancient woodland status. The area includes a number of sites protected for their wildlife interest.
- 2.13 The Canterbury District has 14.5 miles of coast line and this is one of, if not the most, used type of open space in the district. The primary function of beaches is coastal protection, however it has been recognised through the Open Space Strategy assessments and responses to the Local Plan consultations that beaches are a major contribution to the use of public open space.

- 2.14 Cemeteries, churchyards and burial grounds are considered to be part of the general public open space within an area. They can be formal or offer a range of alternative burial options such as woodland glades or green burial areas. Some sites are closed and can offer sanctuaries to wildlife or a quiet space in the urban area.
- 2.15 Civic space is often the “hard landscape” in urban areas, these areas are incorporated into the Open Space Strategy as they form an integral part of the public open space network in the urban areas. They also need to be included in the overall regeneration of the urban areas of Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable.

3.0 National and Local Strategies, Policies and guidance

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework provides guidance on delivering, protecting and enhancing open space, sports and recreational facilities, public rights of way and local green space designation. Furthermore, Paragraph 128 states that “Access to good quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities”.
- 3.2 Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17, 2002) has been referred to as national best practice in the draft local plan as prior to the introduction of the Planning Practice Guidance this was the relevant guidance and was also used when formulating the Open Space Strategy and carrying out the audits to assess

open space requirements. PPG17 and its companion guide “Assessing Needs and Opportunities” recognised that open spaces, sport and recreation all underpin people’s quality of life. Well designed and implemented planning policies for open space, sport and recreation are therefore fundamental to delivering broader Government objectives.

3.3 Planning Practice Guidance, Section 37, Open Space, Sports and Recreation facilities 2014 is at present the relevant guidance to refer to and takes a similar approach to PPG17. Paragraph 001 states “Open space should be taken into account in planning for new development and considering proposals that may affect existing open space. Open space, which includes all open space of public value, can take many forms from formal sports pitches to open areas within a development, linear corridors and country parks. It can provide health and recreation benefits to people living and working nearby; have an ecological value and contribute to green infrastructure, as well as being an important part of the landscape and setting of the built development, and an important component in the achievement of sustainable development”. This guidance also states “It is for local planning authorities to assess the need for open space and opportunities for new provision in their areas”. An audit and assessment of open space was carried out through the review of the Open Space Strategy in 2013. This is referred to in more detail in paragraphs 4.2 - 4.5 of this paper.

3.4 Planning Practice Guidance Section 37, Paragraphs 005-022 Local Green Space Designation. This is a new designation introduced in the National

Planning Policy Framework 2012. Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities. This is referred to in more detail in paragraphs 4.33 - 4.40 of this paper.

4.0 Relevant Canterbury City Council Plans and Strategies

Canterbury City Council draft Open Space Strategy 2014.

- 4.1 The Open Space Strategy’s overall aim is to “Aspire to protect and enhance the existing quality of our public open space and promote its usage”.(Para 3.4, OSS). During the review of this strategy the view was taken to incorporate all the relevant strategies relating to open space into one document, the Open Space Strategy. These include the Playing Pitch Strategy, the Play Strategy and the Allotments Strategy, which are now referred to as statements not strategies.
- 4.2 The Canterbury district public open space standards as set out in the Open Space Strategy are based on national best practice and consultation, they are set out in the table below:

Typology	Definition	Agreed thresholds	Justification of threshold	Local Standard
Parks and Gardens	Including urban parks, country parks and formal gardens.	2,000 metres	CABE guidance and consultation	0.3 hectares per 1,000 people (3m ² / person)

Typology	Definition	Agreed thresholds	Justification of threshold	Local Standard
Green corridors	Including rivers and canal banks, cycle ways and rights of way Plus accessible green space in urban fringe.	300 metres	Based on ANGST guidance and consultation results	1.3 – 1.7 hectares per 1,000 people (13 – 17 m ² / person)
Amenity green space	Including informal recreation spaces, green spaces in and around housing.	1,000 metres	ANGST and consultation results	1.3 – 1.7 hectares per 1,000 people (13 – 17 m ² / person)
Fixed Play areas	<i>Fields in Trust have refined these areas to:</i>			0.3 hectares per 1,000 people (3m ² / person)
LAPs Facilities targeted at 0 to 5 year olds	Local Area of play space (LAP) – no equipment	100 metres / up to 1 minutes' walk	Based on FIT guidance and consultation results	Part of 0.3 hectares per 1,000 people (3m ² / person)
LEAPS Facilities targeted at 5 to 12 year olds	Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)	400 metres / up to 5 minutes' walk	Based on FIT guidance and consultation results	Part of 0.3 hectares per 1,000 people (3m ² / person)
NEAPS Facilities targeted at 12 to 18 year olds	Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)	1,000 metres / up to 15 minutes' walk	Based on FIT guidance and consultation results	Part of 0.3 hectares per 1,000 people (3m ² / person)
Destination play facilities targeted at 0 18 year olds	Play facilities have a distinctive feature and part of a larger facility	20 minutes' drive time	Based on FIT guidance	Part of 0.3 hectares per 1,000 people (3m ² / person)
Semi natural and natural open space	Including woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands, wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and derelict open land and rock	1,000 metres	Based on ANGST guidance and consultation results	4.0 hectares per 1,000 people (40m ² / person)

Typology	Definition	Agreed thresholds	Justification of threshold	Local Standard
	areas – cliffs, quarries and pits			
Outdoor sports pitches	Including tennis courts, bowling greens, sports pitches, golf courses athletics tracks school and institutional playing fields and other outdoor sports areas.	1,000 metres	Based on FIT guidance and consultation results	0.87 hectares per 1,000 people (9m ² / person)
Allotments	An allotment is a piece of land approximately 250 square metres in size which can be rented out for growing fruit and vegetables predominantly.	NA	National Society for Allotments and Leisure Gardeners.	15 plots per 1,000 household or 1.56m ² per household.
Civic Space	Civic and market squares and other hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians perform a range of recreation functions and are a key element of the civic environment.	TBC	CABE Space guidance	One major civic space per urban centre

4.3 Audit, mapping and gap analysis

During the review of the Open Space Strategy in 2013, an audit, mapping and gap analysis of open space was carried out and verified at community meetings, this is set out in the latest Open Space Strategy. Using the mapped open space, the Canterbury open space standards and the local demographics from the 2011 census data, updated to mid-term point 2012,

the Council was able to identify gaps in provision for each type of open space, set out the requirements and produce priority lists for open space provision and enhancement.

The detailed maps of public open space and the priority lists are available on the website www.canterbury.gov.uk/openspacestrategy.

4.4 Following the analysis in 2014, the identified gaps in provision are:

Canterbury

- Amenity green spaces – Southern section of Wincheap and Barton Ward
- Outdoor sports pitches (1 adult, 4 junior/mini football & 1 rugby)

Herne Bay

- Amenity green spaces – Reculver, Heron, West Bay wards
- Outdoor sports pitches
- Play areas for Reculver
- New allotment site

Whitstable

- Amenity green spaces – Swalecliffe, Tankerton, Harbour and seasalter wards
- Play area at South Tankerton and harbour wards
- Outdoor sports pitches (Mini/ junior football, cricket, rugby)
- New allotment site

Rural areas

- Green corridors – Herne Bay to Canterbury, Faversham to Canterbury via The Blean and Bridge to Canterbury
- Play areas at Chislet, Bossingham and Lower Hardres.

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- 4.5 To address most of the deficiencies identified in the analysis, sites have been allocated in the Local plan. The Local Plan has identified a requirement of 15,600 housing units over the period up to 2031, this will include a requirement for an additional 178 hectares of various forms of open space to serve new development in the district, this will be partly met through Green Infrastructure. The Open Space policies in the Local Plan and the Open space Strategy aim to provide, protect and enhance open space and green infrastructure. All the strategic development sites will be required to provide contributions in respect of on-site provision of open space, access to the countryside and mitigation for any impact on designated sites for wildlife (wardening and other provisions to ensure no net detriment to habitat/species of recognised value) and in particular no likely significant effect on European wildlife sites. Smaller developments will need to show how they will provide suitable community facilities reasonably expected as part of the development and if these cannot be supplied as part of the development, contributions to enhance the existing provision may be required. Enhancement also means improving the quality of the existing sites and ensuring they are multi-functional to meet the many different needs. The priority lists as set out in the Open Space Strategy (appendices 14-25) will be considered as part of the process when assessing the need on development sites and within the immediate area that serves those sites.

Open Space Policies

- 4.6 **Local Plan Policy OS2** aims to protect playing fields. **Policy OS3** allocates Land at Greenhill, Herne Bay for use as public playing fields, this is an allocation carried forward from the adopted Local Plan 2006. The decision was taken in 2013 to remove the allocation for Canterbury City Football Club and part of the allocation for informal public recreation uses including public playing fields at Ridlands Farm, Canterbury. This was due to part of this site coming forward as a strategic site allocation, therefore provision has been made at an adjacent site, **Policy OS5** allocates Land at Stuppington Lane, Canterbury for informal recreational use and public playing fields to replace the allocation formally at Ridlands Farm, Canterbury. The Council is continuing to seek a suitable site for Canterbury City Football Club to accommodate a new football ground. Appendix 1 sets out the maps showing the removal of the allocation and the new open space allocation.
- 4.7 **Policy OS4** allocates Land adjacent to St Augustine’s Business Park, Swalecliffe for open space designation for use as junior football pitches. Appendix 1 shows a map of the allocation.
- 4.8 The Council is aiming to address the remaining deficiencies and the overall requirement of 178ha of additional Open Space requirements through the Strategic Site allocations for housing and mixed use as set out in Policy SP3. These strategic site allocations make provision for new public open space, play areas, sports and leisure facilities, allotments and community gardens.

4.9 When assessing allotment requirements to meet the deficiency, the Council also considered the benefits of community gardens. These are an alternative means of gardening which meets the needs of a more diverse group of people and are more accessible to a wider range of people. They make provision for people who would not otherwise have access to an allotment. Taking this approach aims to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity in line with the Equality Act 2010. Community gardens are more flexible and also are more likely to attract external funding. The decision was therefore taken to include provision of community gardens in the Local Plan to meet part of this deficiency. **Policy OS11** aims to make provision for allotments and community gardens as part of new housing developments. **Policy OS14** allocates a site at Lime Kiln Road, Canterbury for allotments and community gardens and **Policy OS15** aims to protect allotment and community garden sites and **Policy QL7** allocates sites at Land South of Greenhill, Herne Bay and Land at end of Vauxhall Avenue, Canterbury for community purposes including allotments and community gardens. These allocations have been carried forward from the adopted Local Plan 2006 but now includes provision for community gardens.

Green Gaps

4.10 The green gap policies were originally formulated in 2002 following national objectives to restrain built development outside urban areas and in the countryside. Within the Canterbury District there has been a gradual erosion of the open countryside and coalescence between built up areas due to

development. The Council is concerned that this gradual coalescence not only harms the character of the open countryside, but is also having an adverse impact on the setting and special character of villages, the Council therefore consider that it is important to maintain the green gaps, this is the purpose and aim of **Policies OS6 & OS7**.

4.11 When considering the Strategic Site allocations at Land at Sturry/ Broad Oak and South Canterbury the decision was taken to amend the boundary of the green gap between Sturry and Broad Oak and to allocate an additional green gap between Canterbury and Bridge to ensure the countryside between these areas are protected. In response to the consultation on the Canterbury District Local Plan Preferred Option Draft 2013 the decision was taken to allocate a green gap at Chaucer Fields between the University of Kent and Canterbury to ensure protection of the open countryside within this area.

4.12 The following Green Gaps are shown on the proposals map (Insets 1,3,& 5) :

- Between the urban areas Herne Bay and Whitstable
- Between Canterbury and Sturry
- Between Sturry and Westbere
- Between Sturry and Hersden
- Between Sturry and Broad Oak
- Between Blean and Rough Common
- Between Canterbury and Tyler Hill
- Between Canterbury and Bridge
- Between Canterbury and University of Kent

Appendix 2 shows location plans of the additional and amended green gap allocations.

Protected Existing Open Space

4.13 The overall deficiency in open space in the District means that the Council is especially determined to prevent the loss of protected open space within the urban boundaries, whether publically or privately owned, by reason of its contribution towards recreational and visual amenity, therefore this Local Plan has identified areas for the Protection of Existing Open Space.

4.14 **Policy OS9** aims to protect areas that have been allocated as Protection of Existing Open Space. An assessment of areas of Protected Existing Open Space was carried out in parallel through the review of the Local Plan and the Open Space Strategy in 2013. The Council identified through the assessment and evaluation that there were additional areas that were valuable to protect. These areas have therefore been allocated for Protection of Existing Open Space and include Land at Hollow Lane, Canterbury, Duncan Down and Benacre Wood, Whitstable, an area at Mariner's View, Whitstable, an area at Church Lane, Whitstable and an area along the coast from Bishopstone Manor to Reculver.

4.15 An area adjacent to the proposed strategic site at Herne Bay Golf course has also been allocated for protection to ensure that it contributes towards recreation and visual amenity for the area.

4.16 In response to the consultation on the Canterbury District Local Plan Preferred Option Draft June 2013, a further site was allocated at Kingsmead Field, Canterbury for Protection of Existing Open Space. This applies to the area submitted as a proposed Village Green. The remainder of the land to the east of the site has been allocated for 15 dwellings.

Appendix 2 shows location plans for additional Protected of Existing Open Space designation.

Loss of open space and play areas in new residential developments.

4.17 During the review of the Local Plan and through the Open Space community workshops in 2013 when reviewing the Open Space Strategy, a number of responses identified a particular issue. There were concerns that areas of open space and play areas within new residential developments have come under pressure in the past to develop, these are quite often sites that are left over at the end once the development has been built out. The respondents were concerned therefore the Council sought to address the issue.

4.18 **Policy OS10** has therefore been formulated to address this issue and to ensure that these areas are protected as they contribute to the visual or

recreational amenity of the area. An objective to avoid the loss of these areas in the future is to integrate open space into residential development and for open space to be seen as essential to the layout and design of the development. The Council has therefore produced a best practice paper entitled “Public Open Space in New Housing Development” (2014). This paper aims to provide guidance to developers to ensure that open space is properly integrated into new developments and to be functional, robust and accessible to all residents and meets the needs of the local community. The paper forms part of the Open Space Strategy (Appendix 13).

- 4.19 **Policy OS11** ensures that outdoor space is provided within new housing developments proportionate to the number of people who will live there, however, if the provision cannot be provided on site, developers will be expected to make financial contribution towards the provision of new, or improvement of open space or recreational facilities elsewhere in the locality.

Green Infrastructure

- 4.20 Green Infrastructure, comprising networks of multi- functional green space in both rural and urban areas, plays an essential role in supporting ecological process and improving the health and well- being of individuals and societies. Green Infrastructure provides many functions and may have multi-purposes including:
- Creating a sense of place and opportunities for greater appreciation of valuable landscapes and cultural heritage.

- Increasing recreational opportunities, including access to and enjoyment of the countryside and supporting healthy living.
- Conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, including the need to mitigate the potential impacts of new development.
- Improved water resource and flood management and sustainable design.
- Sustainable transport, education and crime reduction.
- Making a positive contribution to combating climate change through adaptation and mitigation of impacts.
- Production of food, fibre and fuel.

4.21 National and regional policy advocates an approach at local level that identifies, promotes and protects green infrastructure through the planning framework, therefore the Council decided to develop a Green Infrastructure Strategy to ensure that green infrastructure is strategically planned and to assist in open space provision.

4.23 The Green Infrastructure Strategy will be expected to contribute to part of the provision of 178 hectares of open space required to serve new development in the district. The Council will therefore expect all the allocated Strategic Sites to include provision for new green infrastructure and to meet the requirements of the Habitats Regulations for alternative open space to protect international wildlife sites.

4.24 **Policy SP5** sets out the overall objectives for future green infrastructure in the district and **Policy OS12** relates to green infrastructure in new development.

- 4.25 A Steering Group was formed in 2010 in order to establish a way forward in developing a Green Infrastructure Strategy. The group consisted of the Local Planning Authorities of Canterbury City Council, Thanet District Council, Dover District Council and Shepway District Council working in partnership. This group forms part of the wider East Kent Green Infrastructure Partnership (EKGIP) which covers the east Kent local authority areas of Canterbury, Thanet, Dover and Shepway. Membership of this group, although not formally constituted, is wider than the local planning authorities and includes the Kent Wildlife Trust, Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. This group developed an east-Kent approach to green infrastructure planning.
- 4.26 The Steering Group took the decision to develop an east Kent Green Infrastructure Strategy which will include a Canterbury District Green Infrastructure Strategy, this will take a shared and consistent approach across the authorities to Green Infrastructure policy and planning and the prioritisation and targeting of delivery. By adopting a strategic green infrastructure approach east Kent could bring together the various strands of existing work being progressed at all scales and in neighbouring authorities. The Canterbury District GI Strategy will aim to create a sustainable green infrastructure network that goes beyond the District boundary to ensure all areas are interlinked.

- 4.27 The first stages of producing an east Kent Green Infrastructure Strategy involved carrying out a study, a report following the study was completed in April 2014. This report provides a reference document on the various plans, reports, surveys and assessments that have been carried out in east Kent, this enabled the four study districts to gain a greater understanding of what evidence already existed and what was required to develop a GI Strategy. This also addressed issues that arised under the duty to cooperate and a basis for future joint working. The aim of this report was to provide a first step in developing an east-Kent approach to green infrastructure planning.
- 4.28 A strategic approach to green infrastructure in east Kent would complement an east Kent sustainable access and recreation management strategy, assist in developing alternative green space provision for recreational activities and support the provision of suitable alternative green spaces which could better withstand visitor pressures. This approach to green infrastructure has ensured a consistent approach applied across east Kent, will demonstrate transparency, establish an evidence-based, repeatable decision-making tool and will ensure that resources are targeted according to need. This approach also helps the Local Planning Authorities in meeting their obligations in the NPPF and in their Duty to Cooperate. An east Kent GI Strategy will also enable Canterbury City Council to meet the aims of the Open Space Strategy and the Canterbury District Local Plan at a District level.
- 4.29 **Policy OS12** ensures that green infrastructure is planned, designed, improved and protected as part of new development and where possible

green infrastructure networks created. This will be supported by the Green Infrastructure Strategy when it is produced.

Riverside Strategy

4.30 The Council has had a long term goal since 1953 to open up the river for access and the Council has produced various policy statements over the years to try to achieve this aim. In 1987 the Council considered that there were opportunities to put the River Stour at the heart of the regeneration of the City .The 1987 Riverside statement was further developed into a River Strategy in 2003, this has been reviewed and the Riverside strategy 2014 will sit alongside the Open Space Strategy. The aim of this strategy is to create a network of access routes including long distance walks, town centre footpath links, riverside paths and cycle routes. The wildlife interest and biodiversity of the river will also be enhanced.

4.31 **Policy OS13** seeks to protect identified land along the riverside corridor from development, recognising the contribution the riverside makes to the character of the City, the importance of access and the recreational value it contributes to. This policy refers to the Riverside Strategy which has identified some potential key benefits to be delivered:

- Encourage more people to walk and cycle off road thereby reducing traffic congestion and air pollution.
- Encourage people to be more active to improve their health and well being.

- Provide an opportunity for people to have contact with the natural environment and wildlife.
- Optimise the potential multi-functional benefits of well-designed and managed riverside open space, for example, flood storage, pollution filter, wildlife habitat / movement corridor, transport corridor for walking and cycling, spaces for active and passive recreation.
- Increase the interest of the city as a destination for visitors and businesses. The riverside corridor provides access to a range of attractive parks and gardens within the city and is a gateway to the wider countryside. It incorporates, attractive sustainable walking and cycling routes to local settlements.

4.32 These benefits also relate to other elements of the local plan relating to sustainable transport, health and well-being and the local economy.

Local Green Space Designation

4.33 The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) has created a Local Green Space designation. This new designation enables local communities through Local Plans or Neighbourhood Plans to identify special protection areas of particular importance to them. This designation will rule out development on these sites other than in very special circumstances (Para 76,NPPF). This was highlighted in the Canterbury District Plan Preferred Option 2013.

4.34 As a consequence of the Canterbury District Local Plan Preferred Option Draft June 2103 consultation the Council received a number of new proposals for site allocations for Local Green Space Designation. There were 18 sites put forward for designation during the consultation. An assessment was carried

out on each of the sites to assess whether they met the criteria as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The full report titled

“Assessments of Local Green Space Proposals in Canterbury District” can be seen at www.canterbury.gov.uk/planningpolicy.

4.35 The sites have been assessed against the criteria set out in the NPPF (paras 76-78). The NPPF states that designating land as Local Green Space would rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. It advises that “Identifying land as Local Green Space should therefore be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services” and if this condition is met, sets out three main criteria to be considered:

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

4.36 The guidance also makes clear that “the Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space”. (Para 77,NPPF). Therefore the criteria have to be met in order for a site to be designated.

4.37 The new proposals were considered by the Council and following recommendations these sites have been allocated in Policy OS1 for designation as Local Green Space:

(1) Prospect Field, Joy Lane, Whitstable

(2) Columbia Avenue Recreation Ground, Whitstable

4.38 The remaining sites proposed for Local Green Space are not considered to meet the criteria for designation.

4.39 However, a further site was recommended at West Beach, Whitstable. This site is designated as Local Green Space, and has been included in Policy OS1. Appendix 4 shows location plans for Local Green Space designation.

4.40 Subsequent to this a further 6 sites in Wickhambreaux, Seaton and Ickham have been put forward during the Canterbury District Local Plan Publication Draft June 2014 consultation. The Council is in the process of assessing these sites.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 The Council has carried out assessments, analysis and consultation through the process of reviewing the Local Plan and the Open Space Strategy. This advice and information has fed into the formulation of the Open Space Policies and the allocation of areas of Open Space, Protected Existing Open Space, Green Gap and Local Green Space Designation and the development of a Green Infrastructure Strategy and the review of the Open Space Strategy.
- 5.2 The main issues raised during the consultation process were requests for designation of areas for Local Green Space, protection for certain areas of open space and requests for park and play areas to be improved. Therefore, sites that met the criteria have been allocated for designation of Local Green Space, additional areas have been included for Open Space allocation including playing fields and junior football pitches, Protection of Existing Open Space and Green Gap designation. The improvement and enhancement of parks and play areas will be addressed through the priority lists in the Open Space Strategy.
- 5.3 The deficiencies in open space were identified through the Local Plan and Open Space Strategy consultation. There have been sites allocated in the Local Plan that are aiming to meet most of these deficiencies through provision, enhancement and protection of open space. The Local Plan has identified a requirement of 15,600 housing units over the period up to 2031, this will include a requirement for an additional 178 hectares of various forms

of open space to serve new development in the district, this will be provided through the strategic site allocations and the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

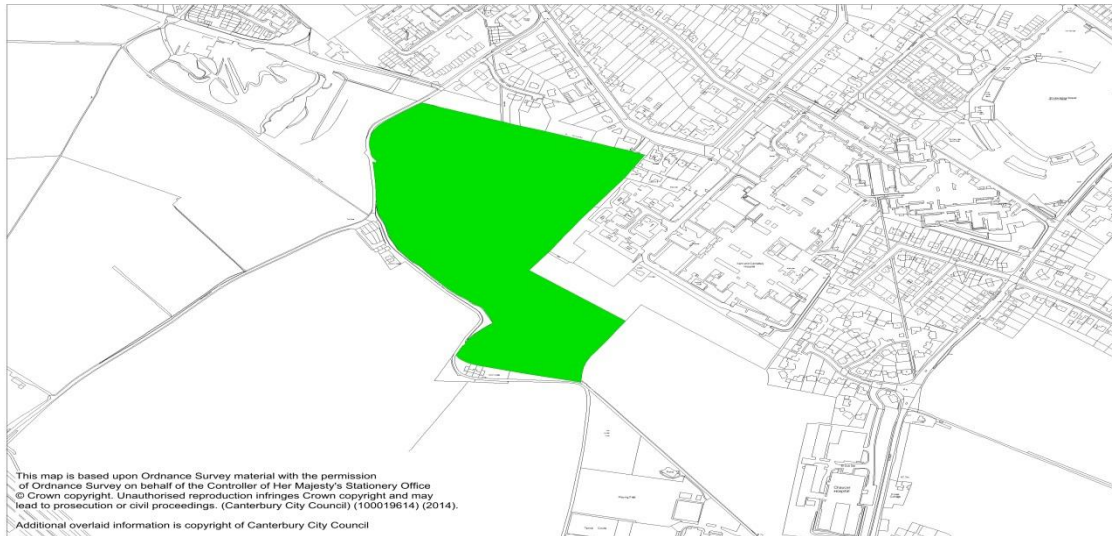
- 5.4 Through the consultation process, comments were made on the importance of visual amenity, biodiversity and ecosystems in relation to open space. The benefits of open space relating to physical and mental health were also highlighted. In response to these comments additional text has been added to the Local Plan to make reference to visual amenity, biodiversity, ecosystems and the importance of open space for health and well-being.
- 5.5 The evidence shows that this topic paper has demonstrated that the policies proposed in the Canterbury District Local Plan Publication Draft 2014 are in compliance with national, regional and local objectives and have met the aims and principles as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 5.6 Meetings, events and consultation have taken place with Council Members, Council Officers from Canterbury City Council and other local authorities, members of the public, outside bodies and organisations. This has ensured that the Council have met their statutory requirements in line with the Duty to Cooperate, the Statement of Community Involvement and the public sector equality duty which has ensured that a wide range of people, organisations, societies, groups and stakeholders have been consulted as part of the process.

- 5.7 The policies, designations and allocations have been based upon an evidence base and through research and consultation including community involvement. The changes in the Canterbury District Local Plan Publication Draft 2014 following consultation have been agreed at Full Council.

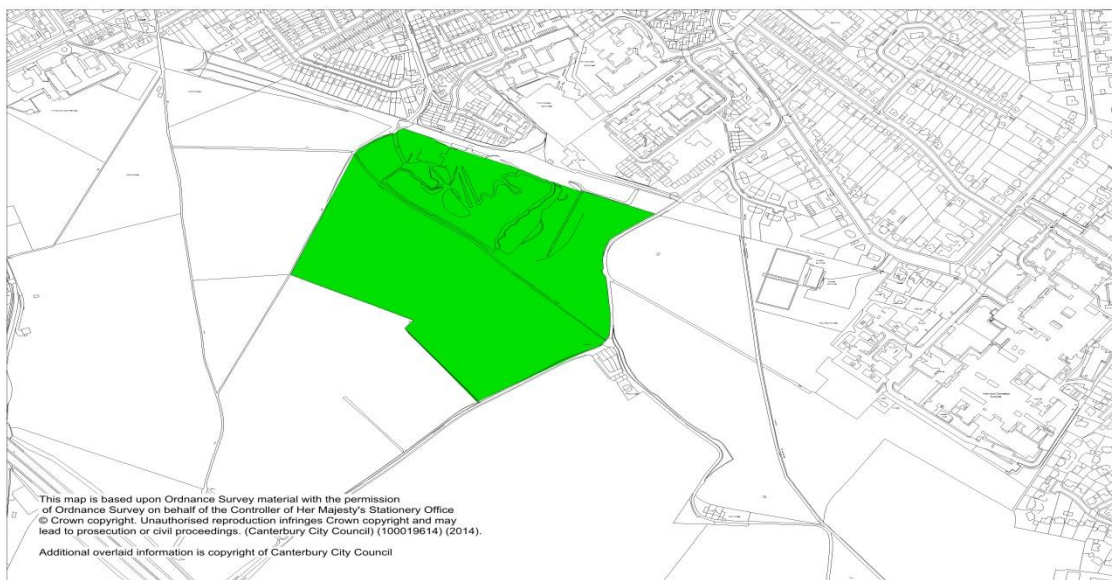
Appendix 1

Maps showing allocations for additional Open Space

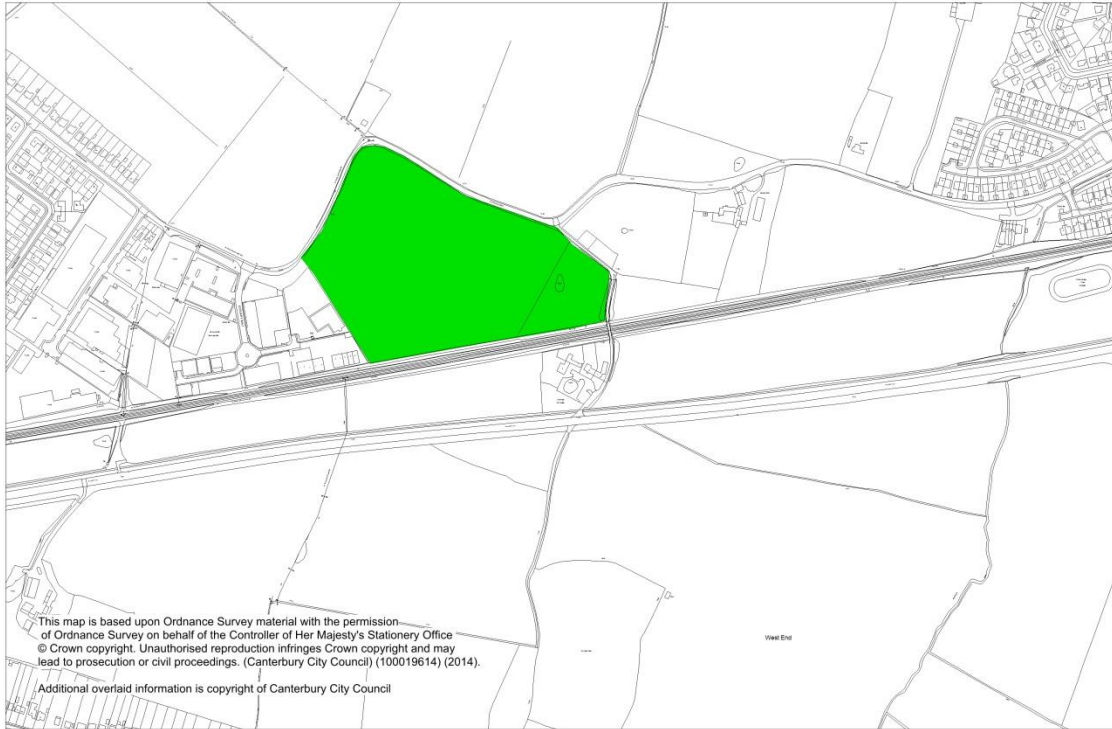
Deletion of allocation in Local Plan Preferred Option 2013 at Ridlands Farm, Canterbury



Policy OS5 - New open space allocation for informal recreational use and playing fields at Stuppington Lane, Canterbury



Policy OS4 – Allocation for junior football pitches at land adjacent to St Augustine’s Business Park, Swalecliffe.

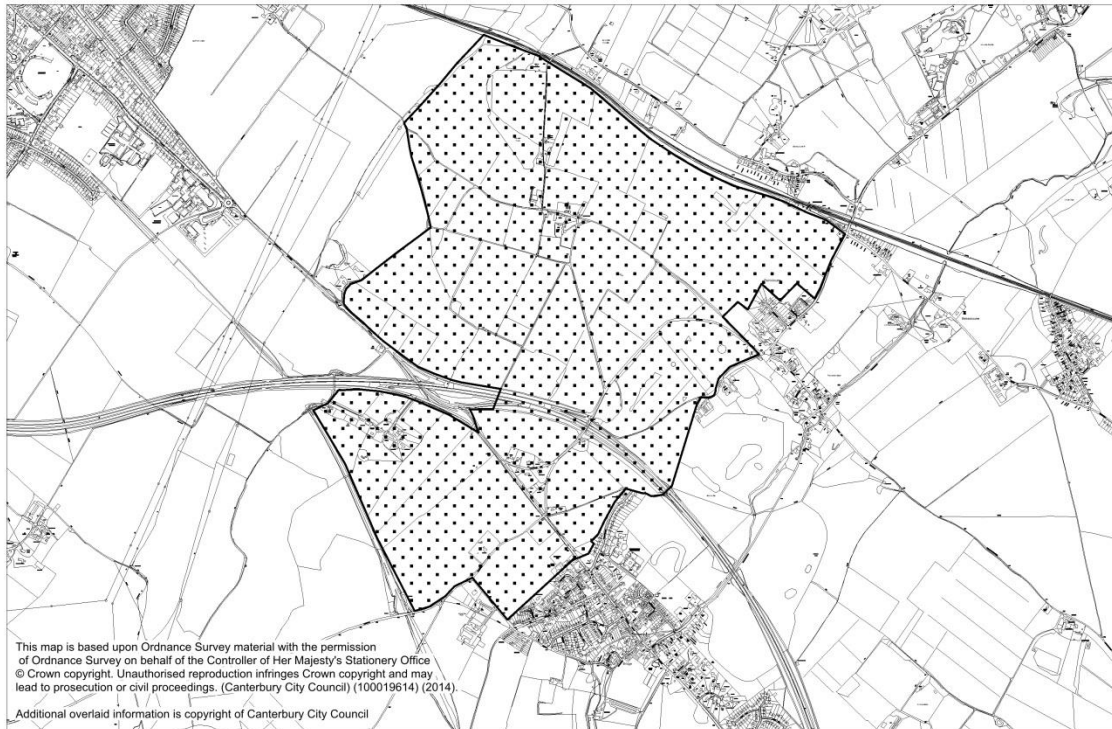


Appendix 2

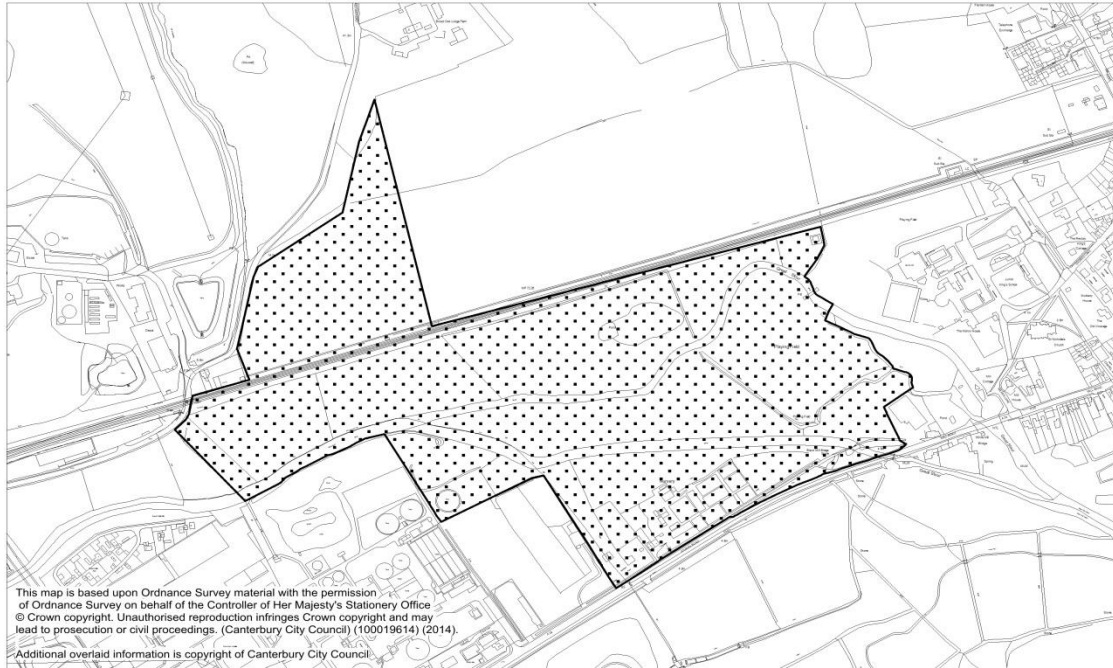
Maps showing allocations for new green gaps and changes to existing green gaps

Policy OS6

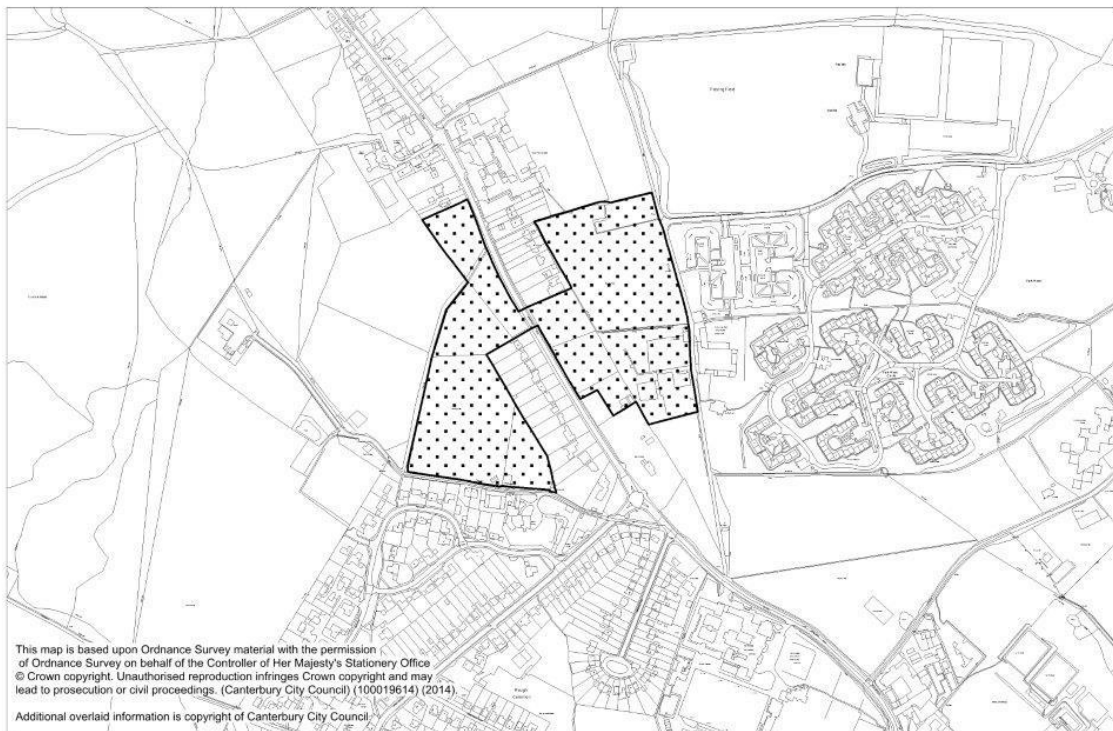
Land between Canterbury and Bridge – new green gap



Land at Sturry / Broad Oak – amendment to green gap boundary



Land at Chaucer Fields, University of Kent, Canterbury – new green gap

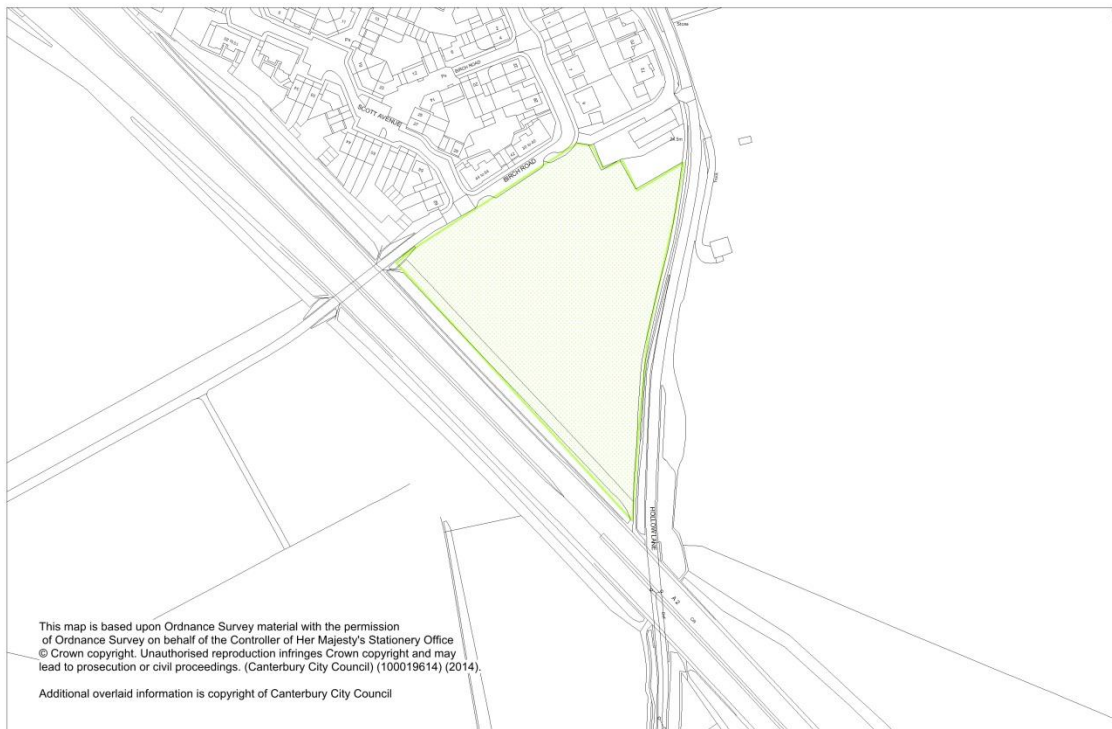


Appendix 3

Maps showing allocations for additional Protected Existing Open Space

Policy OS9

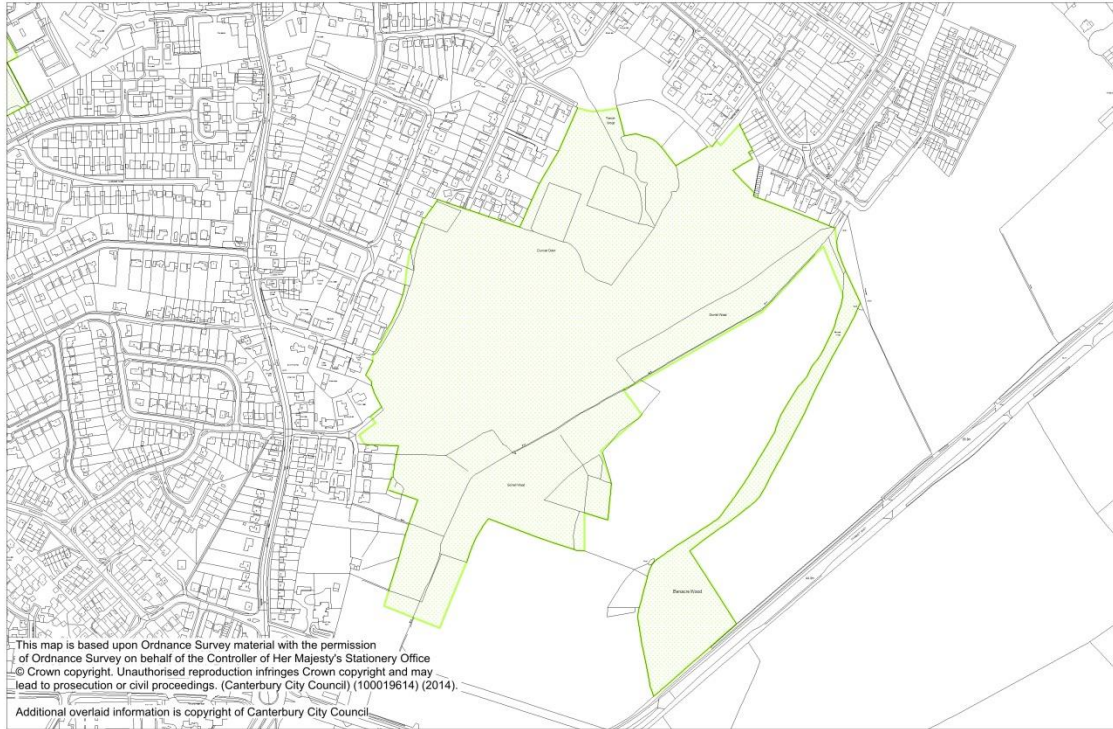
Land at Hollow Lane, Canterbury



Land at Kingsmead Field, Canterbury



Duncan Down and Benacre Wood, Whitstable



Land at Church Lane, Whitstable



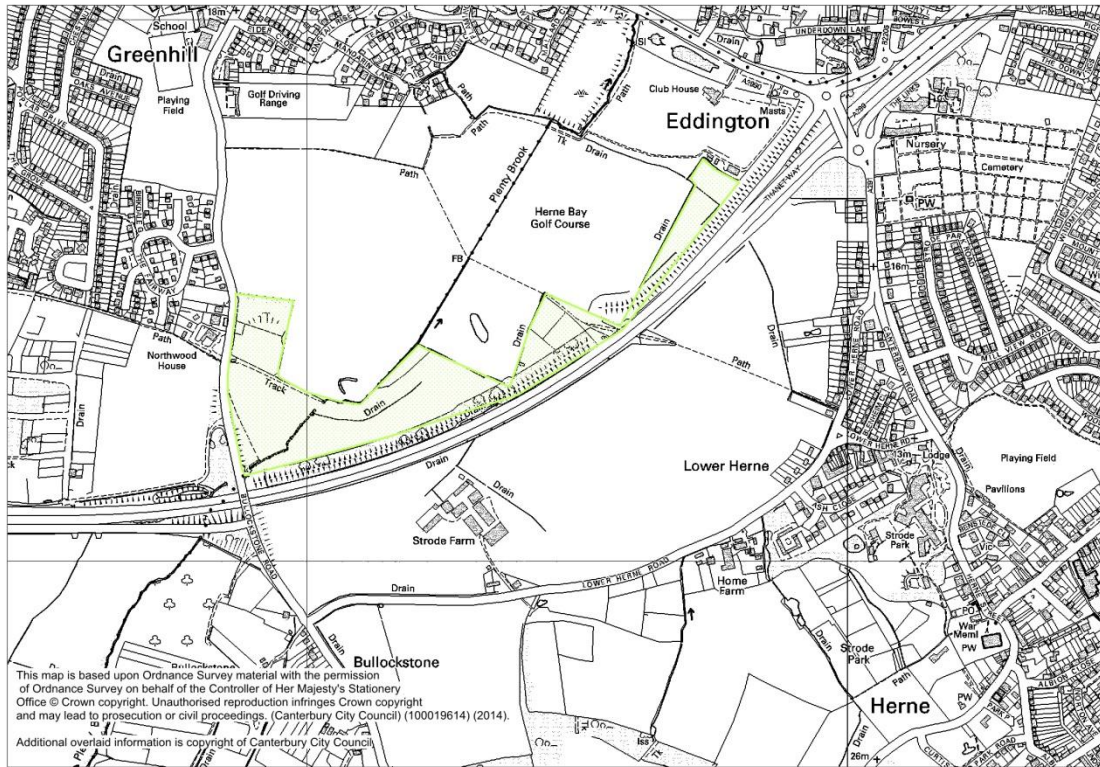
Land at Mariner's View, Whitstable



Area along the coast from Bishopstone Manor to Reculver, Herne Bay



An area adjacent to Herne Bay golf course, Herne Bay

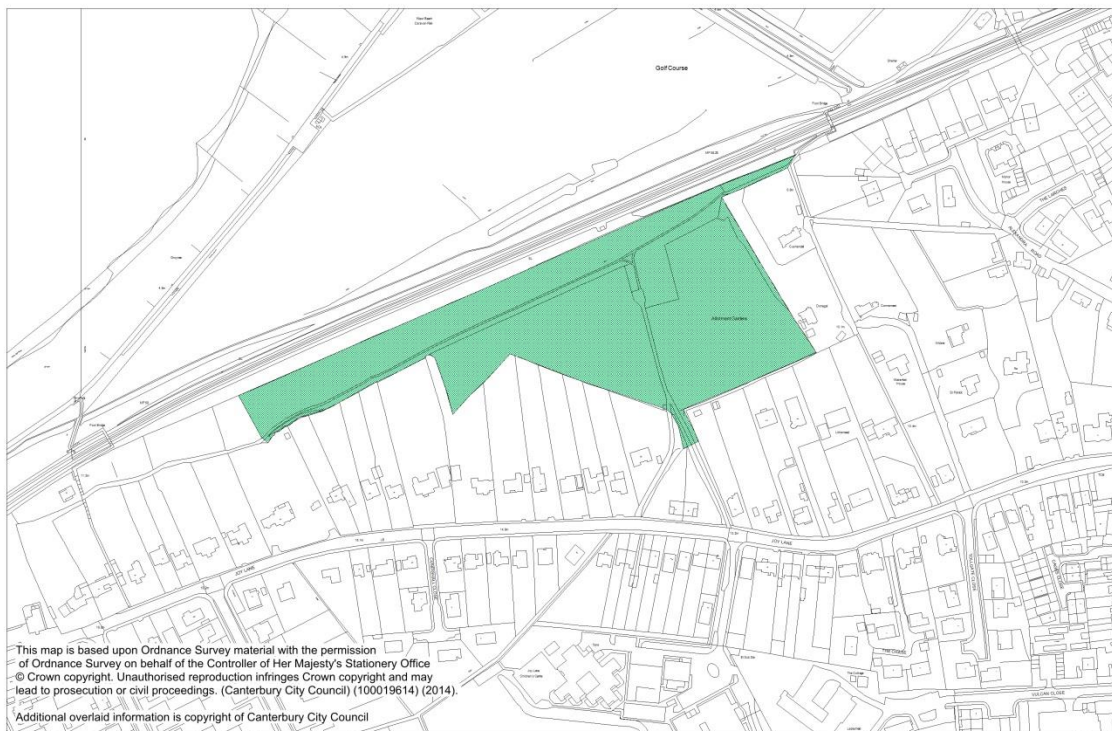


Appendix 4

Maps showing allocations for Local Green Space designation

Policy OS1

Prospect Field, Whitstable



Columbia Avenue, Whitstable



West Beach, Whitstable



