

Midlothian Open Space Strategy



Midlothian

FOREWORD

Open space is a valuable and integral part of the environment in which we all live and plays an important part in our daily lives.

High quality, accessible and functional spaces can have a positive and beneficial impact on the environment and peoples' health and wellbeing; create opportunities for social and economic investment; and encourage people to be more physically active and promote participation in sport and recreation.











Our Open Space strategy echoes these objectives and seeks to provide a framework in which open space is protected, managed and effectively planned for in the future. We see the involvement of public, private, voluntary sector partners and community groups as central to the success of this Strategy. We also feel that setting new standards for open space which better reflect Midlothian's needs is important as is the need to work in partnership with the development sector to ensure that new development makes proper provision for open space and that it plays its part in contributing to improvements to the public realm within expanding communities.

Above all, raising the profile of open space as an important and valuable community asset with benefits for all residents of, and visitors to, Midlothian is a key part of the Council's overall approach to supporting communities and improving the environment in Midlothian.

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Cabinet Spokesperson for Planning & Development

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INTRODUCTION

1. Open space is a valuable and important asset within any community. Open spaces should therefore be accessible and of a quality that contributes to the health, environment and economy of an area. This is the first Open Space strategy prepared by the Council and it provides a context for the identification, assessment and management of a number of different types of open space in a coherent and consistent manner.
2. The Strategy provides a framework within which the Council will, amongst other things:
 - Outline its vision for open spaces;
 - Inform the development of planning policy/take a long term, strategic approach towards protection, provision and management of open spaces;
 - Protect, enhance and create functional open space for the benefit of people, the environment, natural heritage and biodiversity;
 - Prioritise projects and actions based on the audit assessments and community requirements;
 - Develop new standards to promote quality open space as an important part of the strategy and Local Development Plan;
 - Develop open space/green networks; and
 - Prepare an Action Plan to assist with the implementation of the strategy.

The Strategy aims to ensure that there are enough quality open spaces to meet the needs of local communities.

3. The Strategy is consistent with the short term priorities and longer term outcomes of the Single Midlothian Plan which has been agreed by the Council. Proposed priorities for 2013/14 include making Midlothian a more attractive place for doing business and improving biodiversity in Midlothian. Other relevant longer term outcomes include enhancing Midlothian's amenity. The Strategy also cuts across a number of service areas and activities of the Council reinforcing the purpose of the strategy, which is a shared vision with agreed aims and objectives.

CONTEXT

Defining Open Space

4. Greenspace Scotland¹ defines open space as:

“Open, usually green, land within and on the edges of settlements. Parks, public gardens, allotments, woodland, play areas, playing fields, green corridors and paths, burial grounds, natural areas and institutional land as well as ‘civic space’ such as squares or other paved or hard surfaced areas with a civic function are all forms of open space.”

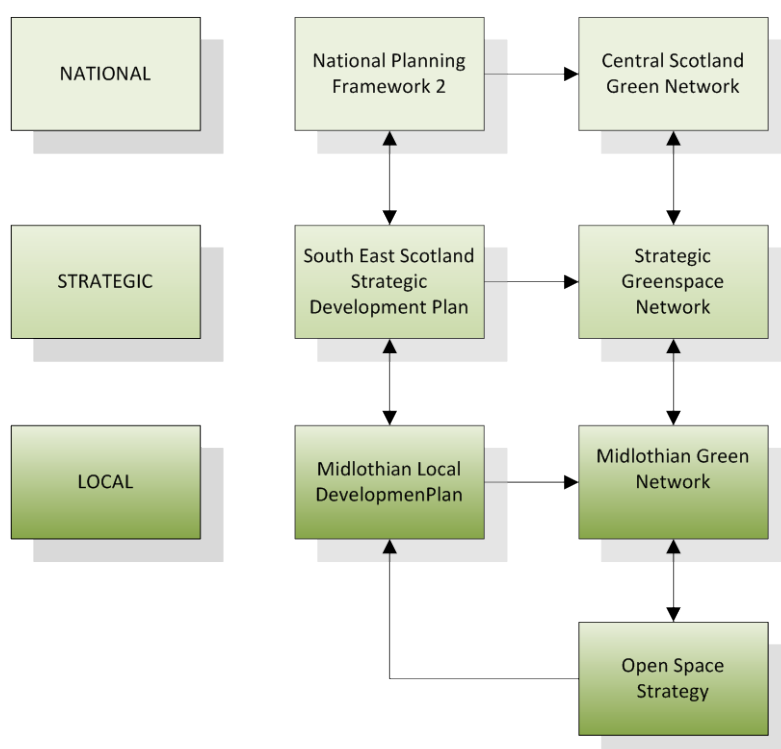
¹ Greenspace Scotland is a registered charitable company and social enterprise. It was established in 2003 to provide a national lead for action on the quality and quantities of greenspace across urban Scotland. Its mission is to improve the quality of life of people in communities across Scotland by supporting the planning, development and sustainable management of greenspace.

5. The types of open space covered by the Strategy are based on the descriptions and definitions provided in the Scottish Government's Planning Advice Note 65 (PAN65), Planning and Open Space and are listed in appendix 1.

Policy Framework

6. Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) seeks to raise the profile of open space as an asset and encourages councils to take a long term approach to the provision, planning and management of open spaces, firstly by carrying out audits of the different types of open spaces within their area and then preparing a strategy for those areas. Guidance on good practice for planning for open space is outlined in PAN 65.
7. The development planning hierarchy in Scotland² includes:
 - the National Planning Framework 2;
 - the strategic development plan (for City Region areas only); and
 - the local development plan
8. The importance placed on open space planning by the Government is reflected by the inclusion of the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) in National Planning Framework 2 (as one of the 14 identified National Developments). The development of the CSGN will provide a strategic network of woodland and other habitats; active travel routes; greenspace links; and watercourses and waterways. It is intended that the CSGN will provide an enhanced setting for development and other land uses as well as improved opportunities for outdoor recreation and cultural activities.

Figure 1 – Open Space/Greenspace Hierarchy



² The system of National Planning Framework and strategic and local development plans was introduced by the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006.

9. Strategic development plans are required to reflect the objectives of the National Planning Framework 2 and to facilitate the delivery of any of the “national developments” identified within their boundaries. The Strategic Development Plan for Edinburgh and South East Scotland supports the creation of the CSGN to establish a strategic green network across the South East Scotland plan (SESplan) area and gives direction to the emerging Local Development Plans within the SESplan area to identify opportunities to contribute to the development and extension of the green network and mechanisms through which they can be delivered.
10. The Strategy supports the current Midlothian Local Plan (2008) and will inform the preparation of the Midlothian Local Development Plan (MLDP) by providing an evidence base to develop appropriate policies (including green networks) to protect and enhance the natural environment, promote high quality design, identify local open space standards and provide a basis for securing developer contributions. It will also form the basis of any relevant Supplementary Guidance requirement of the emerging MLDP.

Council Objectives

11. The strategy is consistent with the short term priorities and longer term outcomes of the proposed Single Midlothian Plan and the Corporate Asset Management Plan to inform capital and revenue decisions. One of the key actions for this strategy is the need to collect relevant data on open spaces in order that priorities can be identified for their retention and maintenance. By its very nature the open space strategy has implications for a number of service delivery functions of the Council. It has close links and relationships with other Council wide initiatives and should not be considered as a stand-alone document for wider environmental improvements.

Greenspace Scotland – Greenspace Map

12. Greenspace Scotland has collated audit information from around the country and prepared the first online map of open space across Scotland. The online map is a useful source for people to see what kinds of spaces are located in their area. The online map can be accessed at – www.greenspacescotland.org.uk

Open Space Audit

13. The Strategy is based on information gathered from the assessment of 210 sites (0.4 hectares or bigger)³ covering 1,359 hectares, as identified in an Open Space Audit. The key findings from the Audit focus on the quality, accessibility and quantity of the sites surveyed.
14. In terms of quality, many sites scored around 60 – 70%⁴ classifying them as “very good”. Thirteen sites were rated as excellent (80%+) and eighteen were below 50% or “good” to “poor” and only one site (Mavisbank House) was assessed as “very poor”,

³ An area approximately 1/3 of the size of a football pitch.

⁴ Each site was assessed using a set of criteria recommended in the “Greenspace Quality: A Guide to Assessment, Planning and Strategic Development” (2008). The assessment was broken down into 5 categories (access and community, attractiveness and place appeal, biodiversity, functionality and community benefits) and each criterion was marked out of 5 with the final scoring out of 100 or a percentage. Anything under 50% is considered “poor” or “very poor”.

scoring less than 20%. This was largely down to the fact that the site is not under Council ownership and is awaiting improvement pending funding becoming available. The quality scores have been mapped by settlement in figures 2 – 5.

15. The accessibility of the key open spaces (play areas, public parks, etc.) was assessed using the Fields in Trust⁵ (FiT) Standard. Midlothian has a good distribution of open spaces within the walking and travel distances used by FiT in their standards⁶. The accessibility results are mapped out in figures 6 to 10c.
16. Likewise the quantity of open space was assessed against the existing FiT standard. A number of additional smaller sites between 0.1 and 0.4 hectares were included in the assessment due to their strategic importance. Midlothian has a generous supply of open space for its population.
17. While quantity is a consideration in ensuring appropriate provision of open space, it is perhaps of lower relative importance than quality and accessibility. Total open space provision can provide a useful guideline to the amount of open space within individual settlement areas and provide a broad basis for comparative assessments when identifying priorities.
18. The outcomes of the Audit point to a good picture across Midlothian but one that could do to be improved. The Audit has not only provided a robust basis from which to develop the Strategy but also a mechanism to monitor progress and changes in sites; to assist in setting future investment priorities; and to give a better understanding of the complexities of providing for open space.

⁵ Fields in Trust, formerly the National Playing Fields Trust, is a charitable trust whose aim is to safeguard recreational spaces.

⁶ Within 10 kilometres of a Country Park; 2 kilometres of a District Park; 1.2 kilometres of a Town Park; 400 metres of a Local Park and 400 and 240 metres of a Local Playspace.

Figure 2 - Open Space Quality (overview)

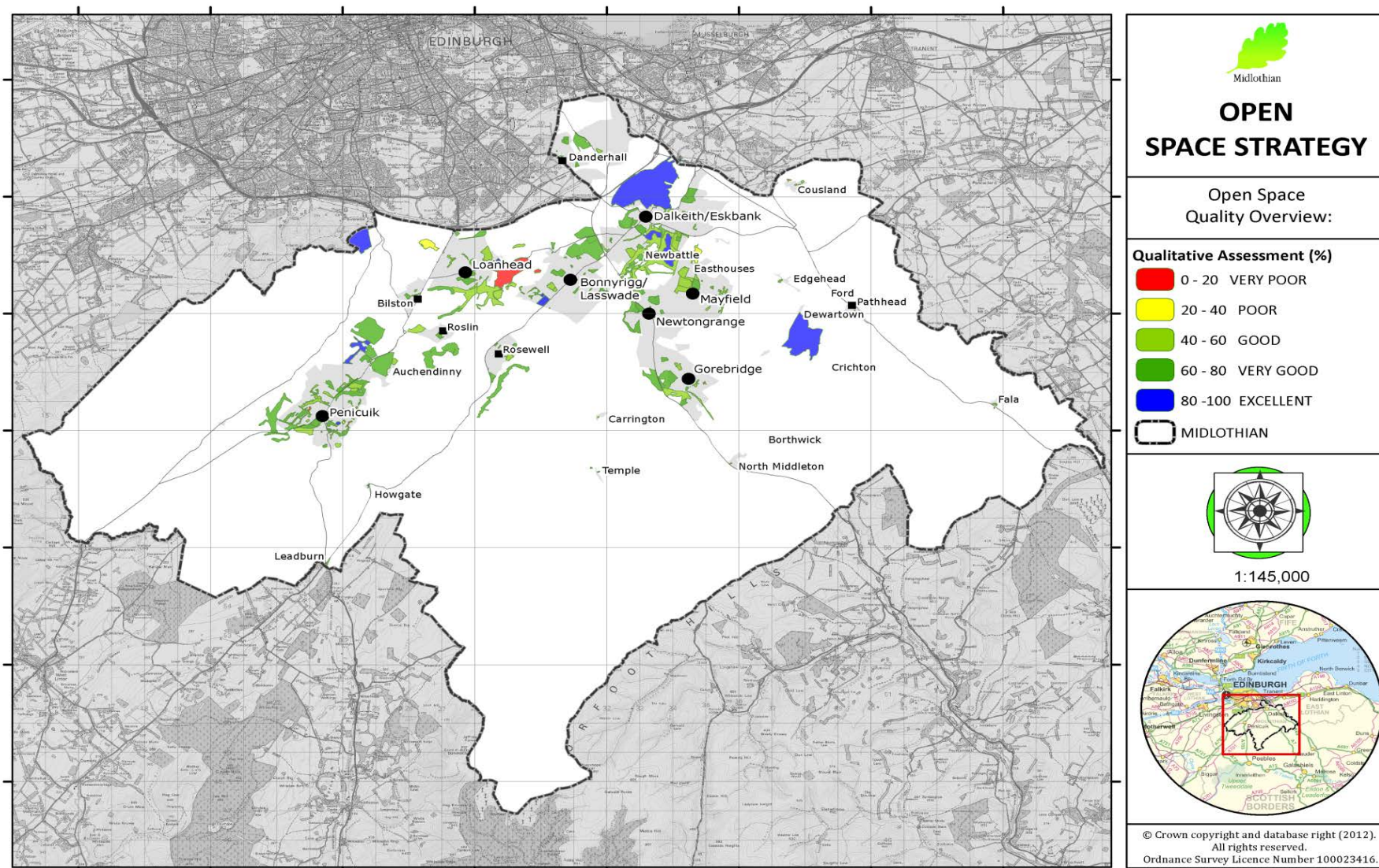


Figure 3 - Open Space Quality (A701/West)

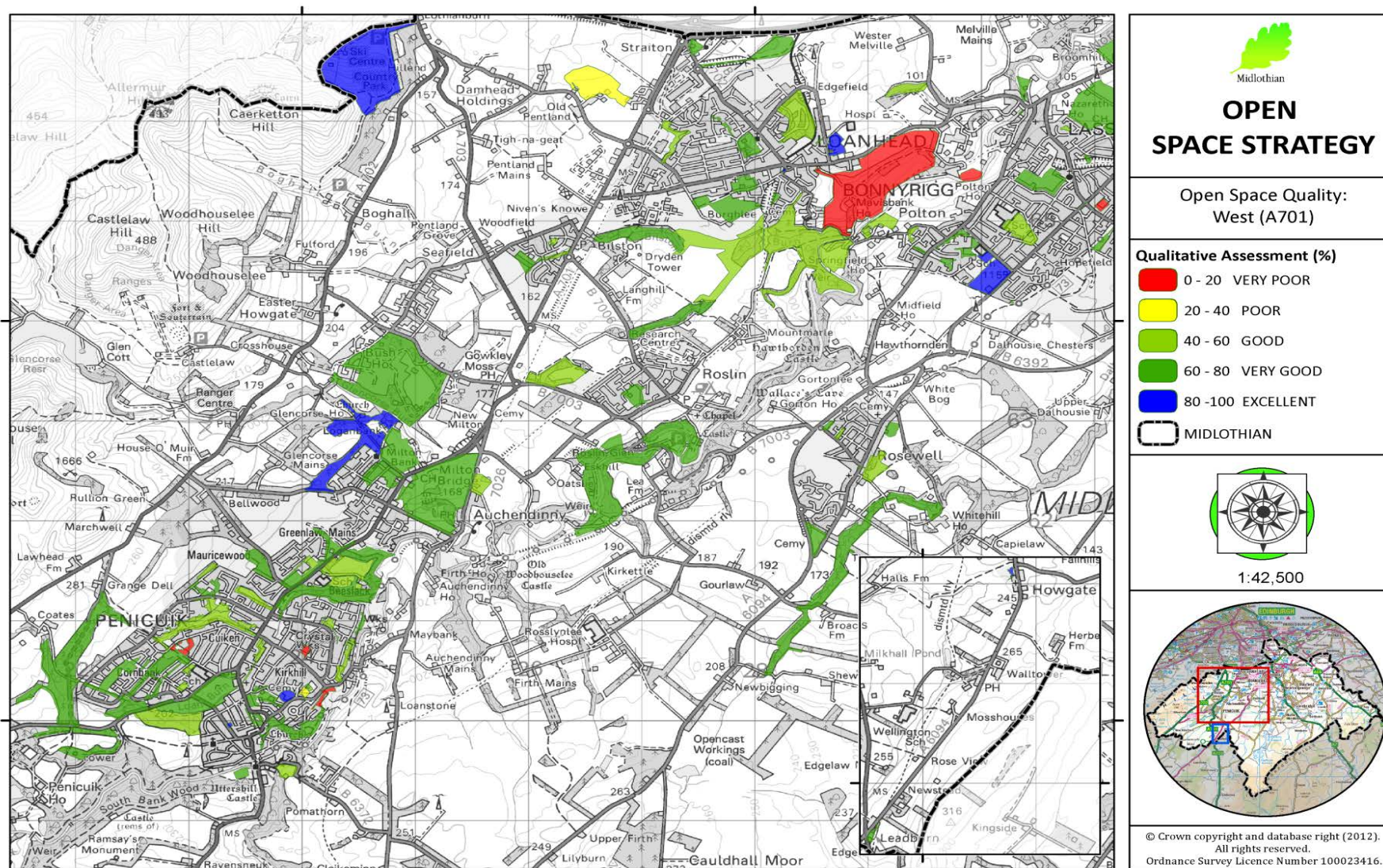


Figure 4 - Open Space Quality (A7/A68 South)

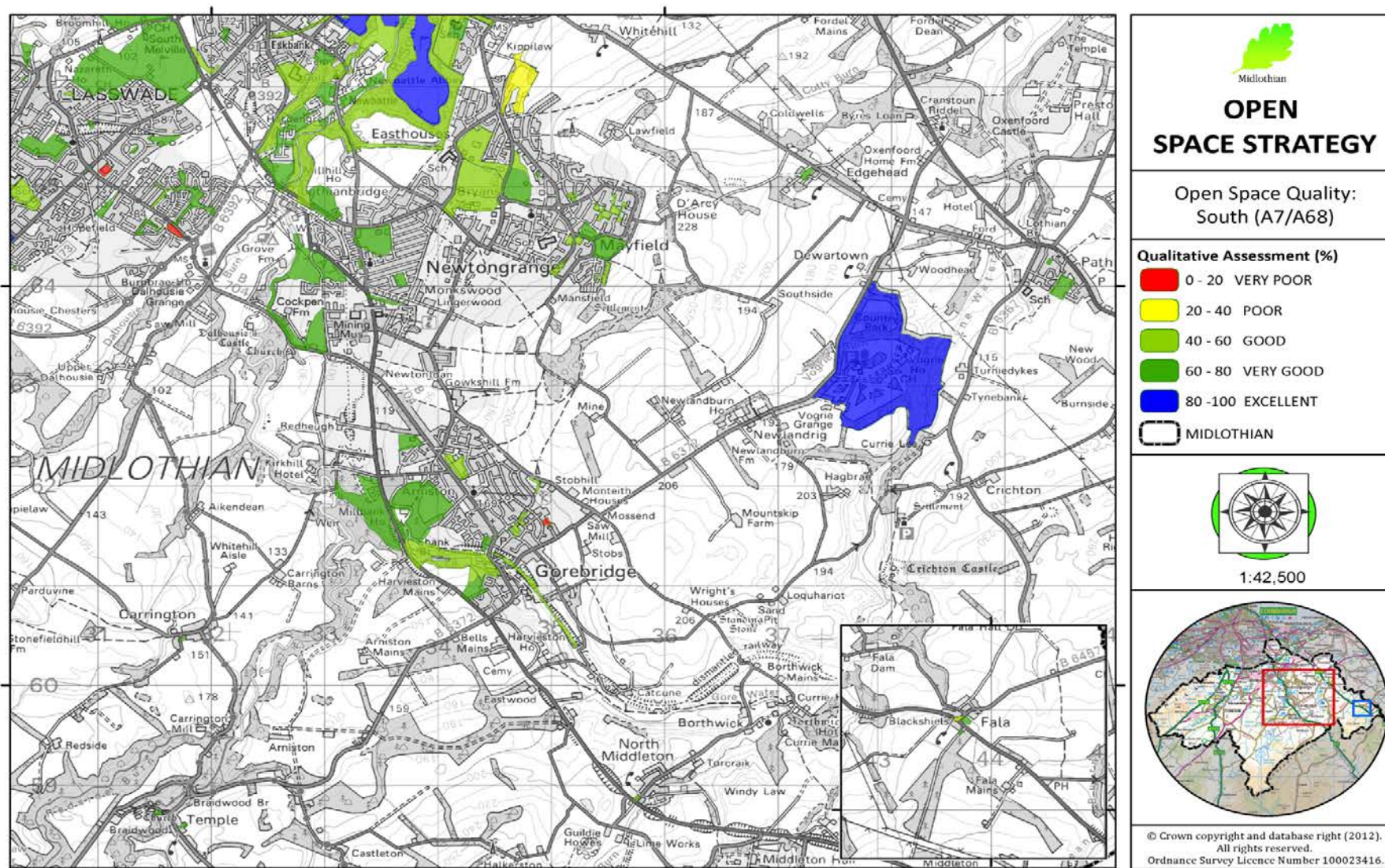


Figure 5 - Open Space Quality (A7/A68 North)

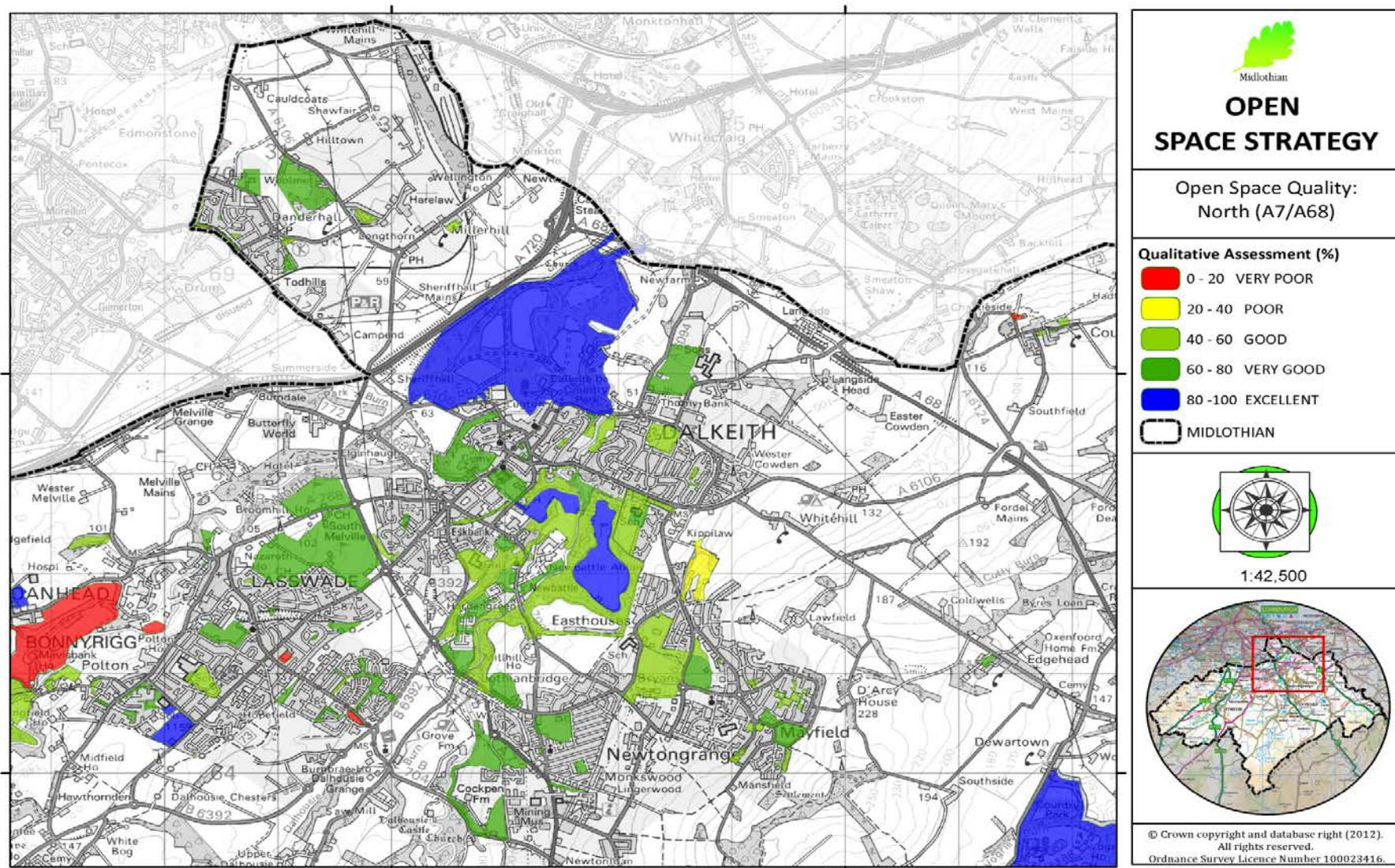


Figure 6 – Accessibility of Country Parks

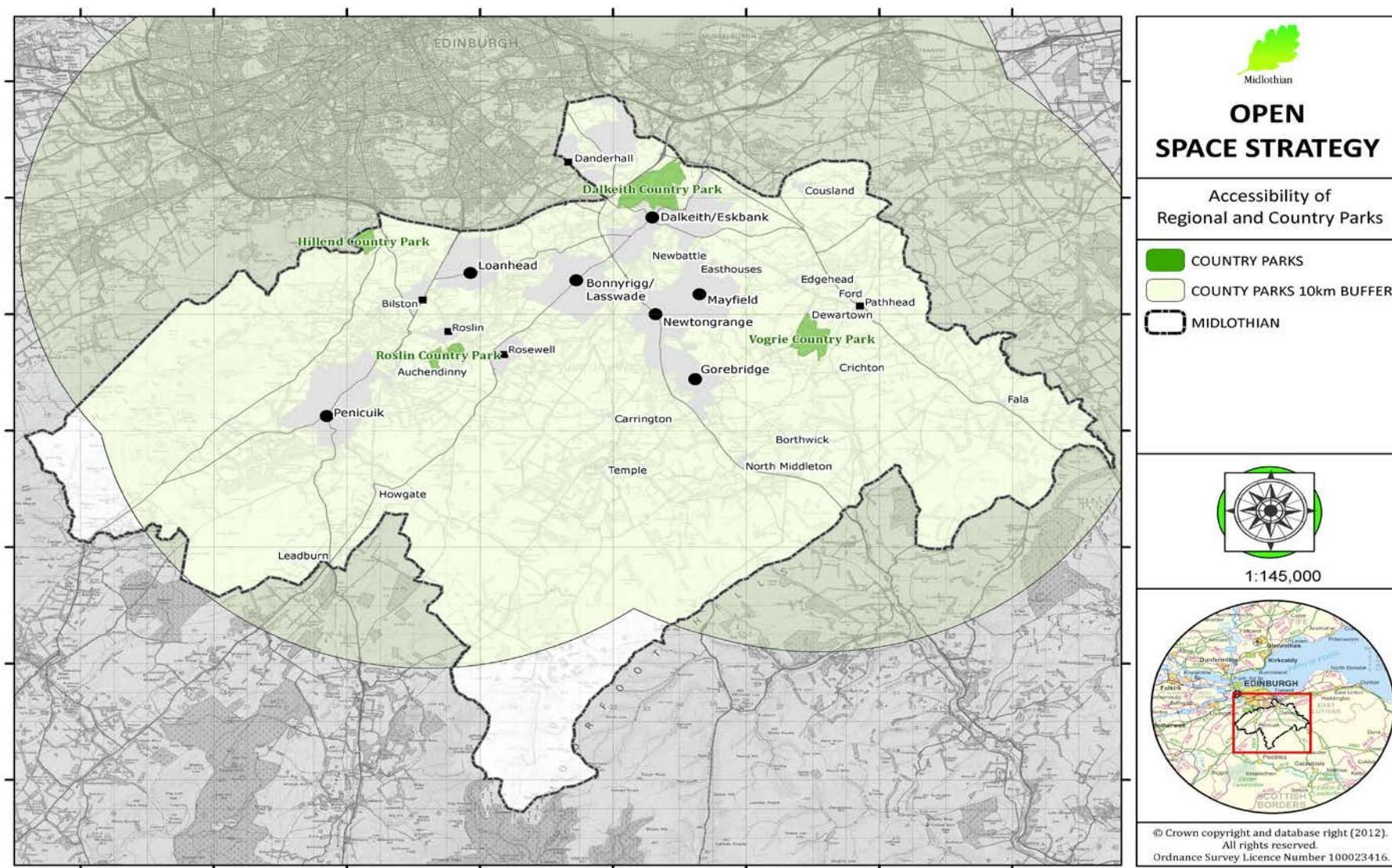


Figure 7 – Accessibility of District & Town Parks



Figure 8 – Accessibility of Local Parks (Midlothian)

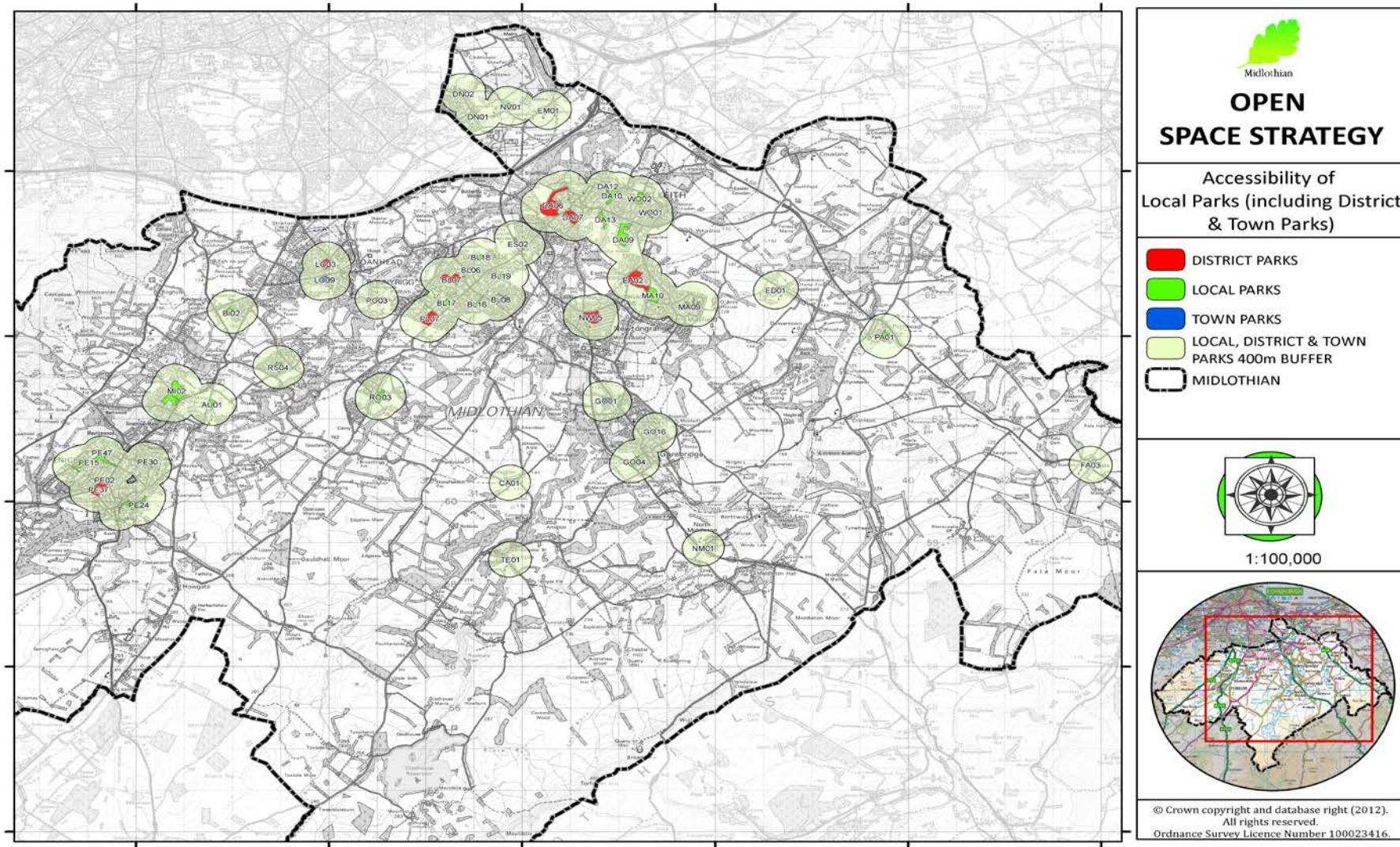


Figure 9a – Accessibility of Local Parks (A701)

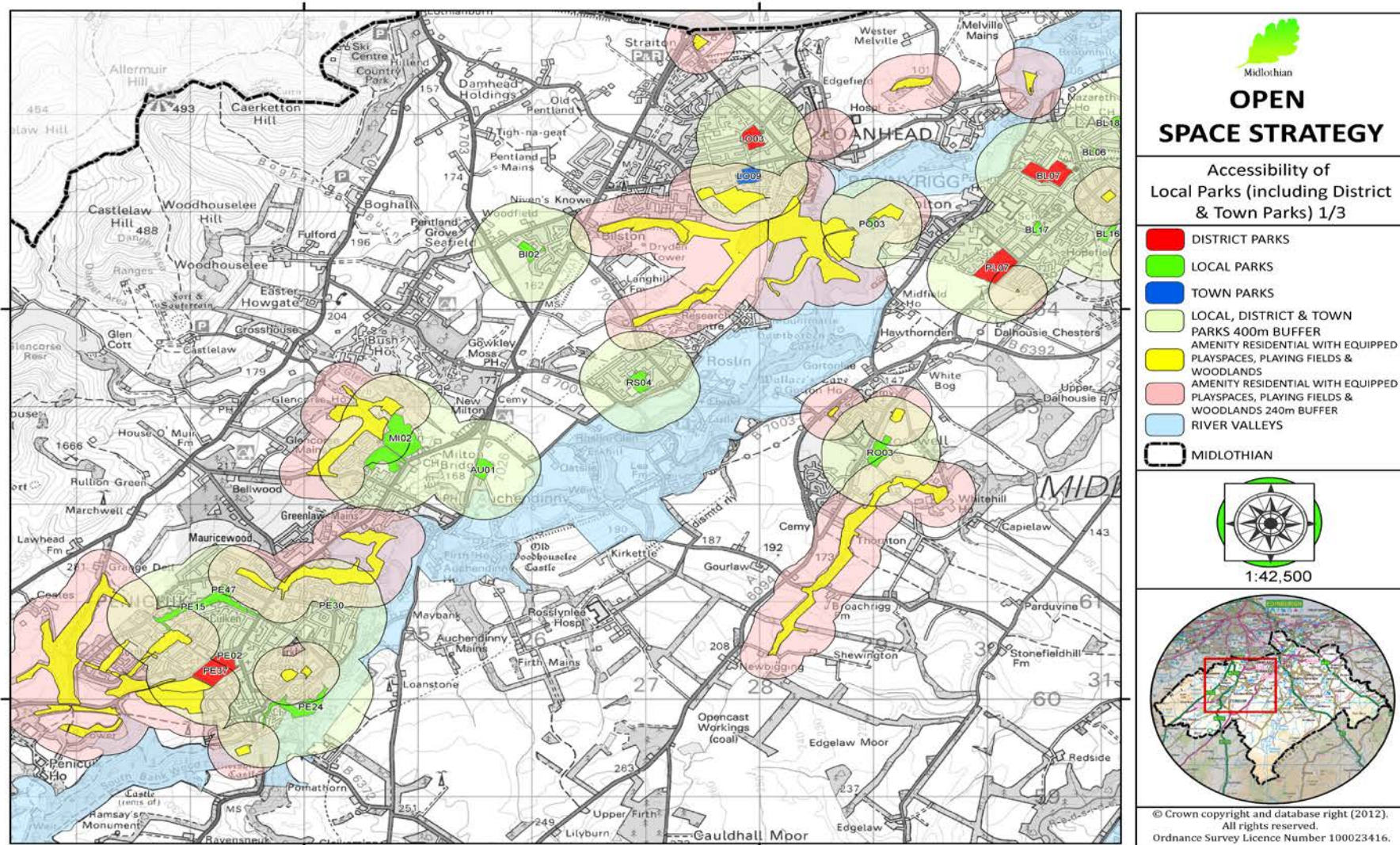


Figure 9b – Accessibility of Local Parks (A7/A68)

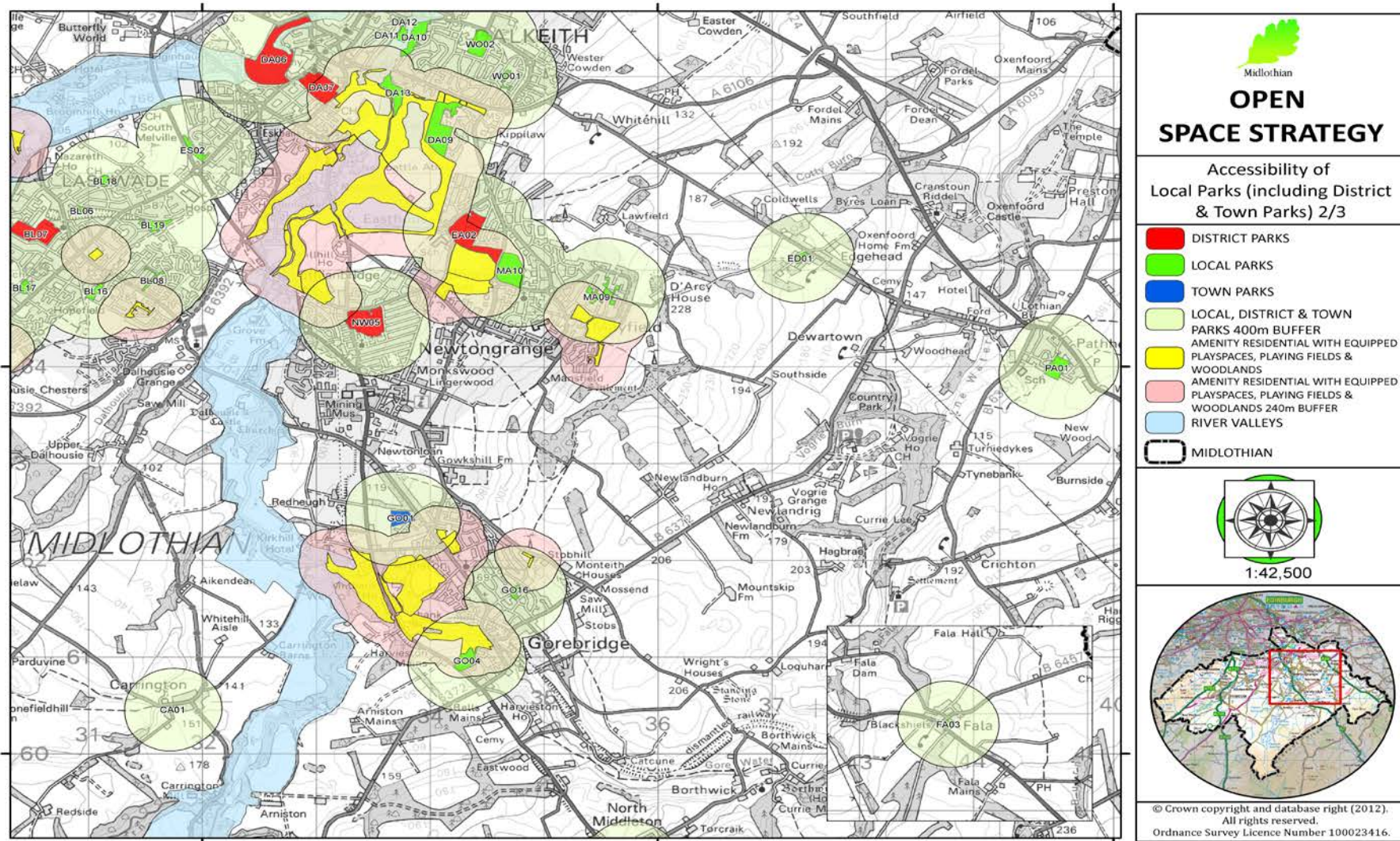


Figure 9c – Accessibility of Local Parks (A7/A68 North)

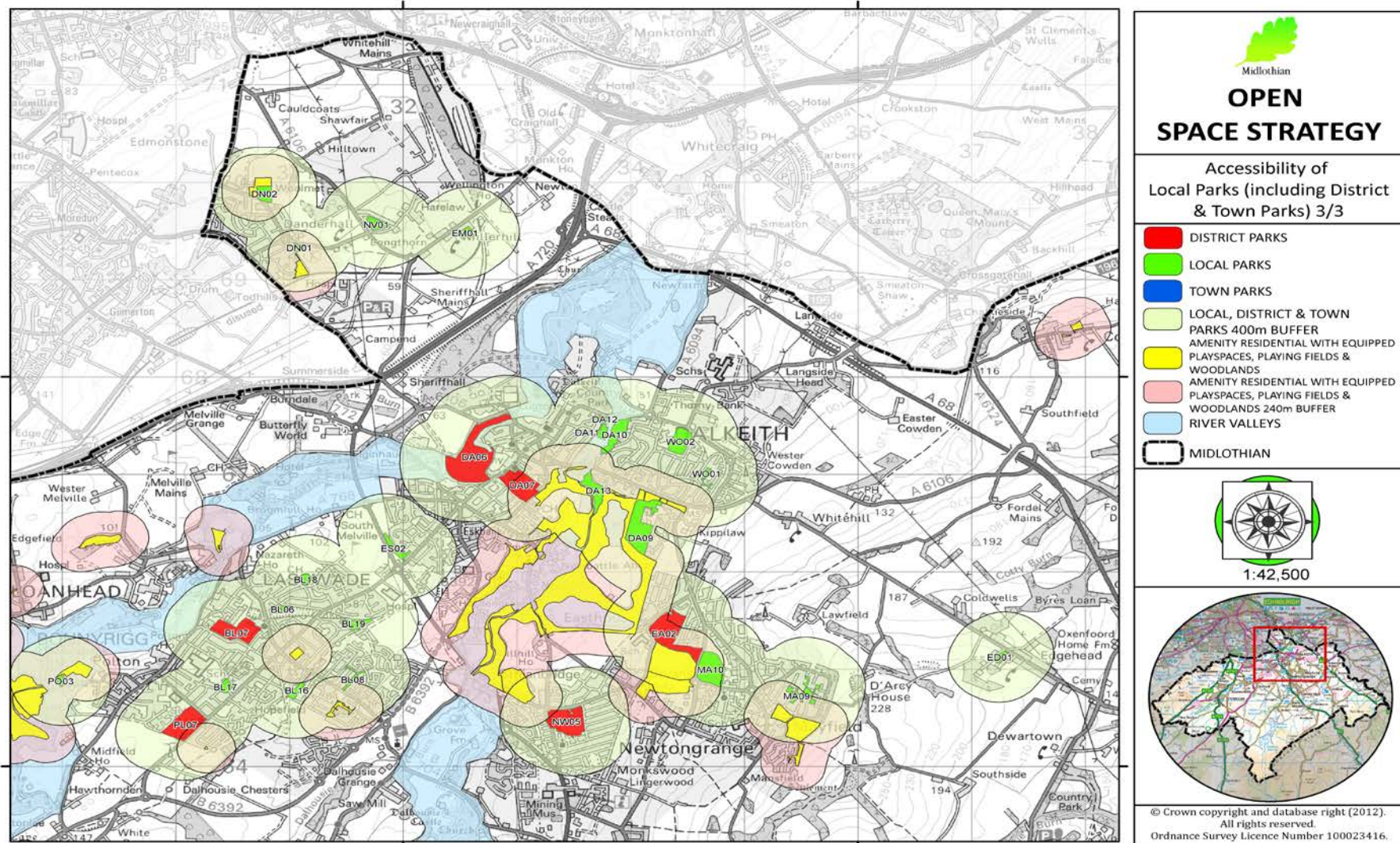


Figure 10a – Accessibility of Play Spaces (A701)

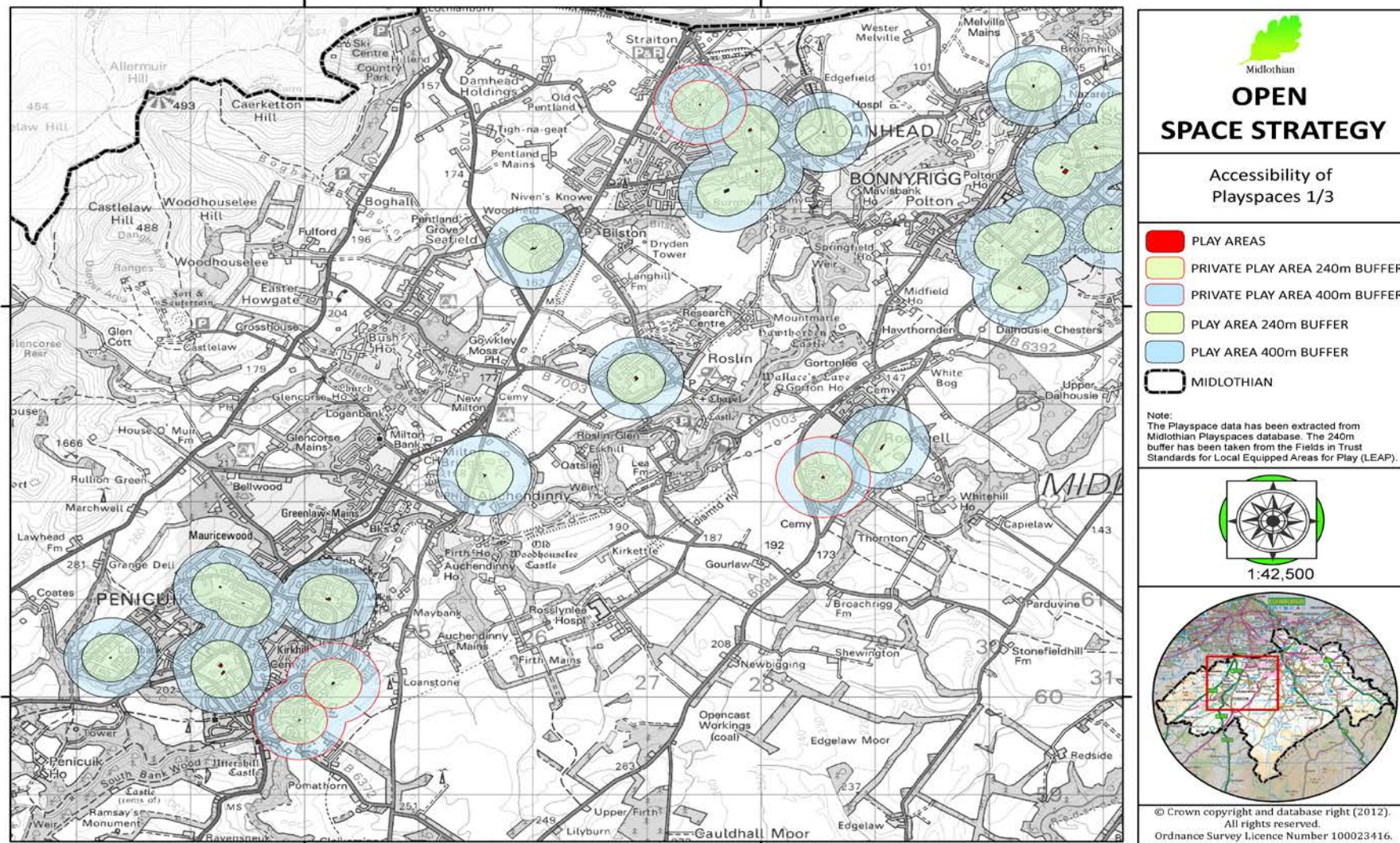


Figure 10b – Accessibility of Play Spaces (A7/A68)



Figure 10C – Accessibility of Play Spaces (A7/A68 North)



STRATEGY







Vision for Midlothian's Open Spaces

19. The Strategy should take a long term view and set out a clear vision of the role and function of open spaces. The Council's vision for open space is set out below:

“Midlothian Council will work towards creating well connected, high quality, accessible and safe open spaces which are fit for purpose for both local people and visitors to the area and support biodiversity.”

Benefits and status of open space








20. In the same way as the physical condition of our towns and villages can influence our perceptions of a place, so it is that having good quality, accessible, functional and well maintained open spaces can have a positive impact on:

-  our health and fitness;
-  our personal well being;
-  our physical environment;
-  our biodiversity;
-  our marketability in terms of investment and job generation; and
-  our attractiveness as a place to visit.

21. These benefits are express or inherent in a number of the short term priorities and longer term outcomes in the Single Midlothian Plan and should be central to our decisions and investments as a local authority.





Objectives

22. The objectives of the Open Space Strategy are to:

-  raise awareness of the benefits and impact of open space;
-  inform Midlothian Local Development Plan (MLDP) policy and standards to protect and enhance open space;
-  act as a vehicle for implementing the MLDP;
-  implement the Midlothian Open Space Action Plan;
-  assess future needs and resources;
-  act as a reference point for and with other related access, environmental and recreational strategies; and
-  contribute to the development the Midlothian Green Network and Central Scotland Green Network.

Strategy Themes

23. Four key themes have been identified to provide a focus for actions and outcomes and a structure to the Action Plan. They are:

-  Protection and Enhancement
-  Partnership and Resources
-  Management
-  Publicity and Promotion

Protection and Enhancement

Development Plan Policy

24. One of the objectives of the Strategy is to raise the profile, status and therefore value of open space as a community asset. The sites contained within the Audit reflect the current extent of key publicly owned and managed spaces across Midlothian. These sites perform a function that is deemed to be of value to the local and/or wider community and as such require a degree of protection from activities and uses that would erode or replace the long term benefits (existing or enhanced) that derive from maintaining these sites as open space.

Open Space Standards

25. The current Midlothian Local Plan (2008) identifies open space and recreation requirements solely in quantitative terms, based on the FiT six acre standard⁷. Government research indicates that this is only one measure and that to better reflect community needs and requirements, local standards based on quality, quantity and accessibility are more appropriate.
26. Following a review of the FiT standards the Council proposes to introduce new standards which are deliverable; relevant to local circumstances; provide clear and consistent guidance; support the planning application process; and be regularly monitored and reviewed. The new standards will apply to public parks and gardens; amenity greenspace; play space; sports areas; green corridors; and natural and semi-natural greenspaces.

Category		Standard	
Quality ¹	A minimum score of 65% for all amenity areas	A minimum score of 75% for all Country Parks & District Parks	A minimum score of 85% for all new open spaces across all typologies
Quantity ²	1.44 hectares of playing fields per 1000 head of population	0.25ha designated & equipped play space per 1000 head of population 0.55ha of informal play space (or other proportion as agreed) per 1000 head of population	1.6ha of parks & amenity open space per 1000 head of population (including civic squares/space but excluding non-managed open space/countryside around towns/woodlands)
Accessibility ³	All communities and settlements have access to a Country Park within 10km	All communities and settlements have access to either a District Park within 2km or Town Park within 1.2km	All communities and settlements have access to a minimum of either a Local Park/Play Park or significant amenity open space (District Park/Town Park/Green Corridor etc) within 0.4km

¹ – referenced to the Greenspace Scotland quality criteria




² – referenced to the Fields in Trust standard

³ – referenced to Open Space Audit

⁷ Guidance on the quantity of playing fields and recreational space to be provided by new development and expressed as a ratio of 6 acres (2.4 hectares) per 1000 population. The standard was and is a general “rule of thumb” guide and does not take account of local circumstances.

27. Other functional open spaces such as allotments, cemeteries, civic spaces etc, are largely demand driven and the Council considers that these spaces generally do not require to be the subject of prescriptive standards.
28. The Council will incorporate these new standards into the forthcoming MLDP. As part of the Strategy these standards will be a material consideration in assessing planning applications until adopted through the development plan.

Green Network Development





29. An important and integral part of the Strategy is developing the concept of green networks. This is a Scottish Government aspiration identified and reflected in the development planning hierarchy (Figure 1). There is no standard definition of what a green network is, what it should contain or how it should be delivered. The Council will develop a Green Network for Midlothian through the MLDP. The key elements of that network will include:
 -  improving the accessibility of open spaces;
 -  making or strengthening the physical links and connections between spaces and places; and
 -  creating open spaces that provide a number of different activities and functions for a range of users at any given time.

Partnership and Resources

30. The Council acknowledges that open space has a role to play in many aspects of its own services as well as those of other public, private and voluntary sectors (health, regeneration, access, biodiversity, education, tourism, inclusion, sport, sustainable places). Equally there are a number of established organisations with an operational interest in the open space agenda.
31. The Council acknowledges that by combining effort and resources through joint partnerships it will generate a wider appreciation and understanding of the social, economic and environmental benefits of open space.
32. The Council will:
 -  establish working partnerships with the appropriate sectors to implement the Strategy;
 -  establish working partnerships with community sport hubs management committees;
 -  engage communities through the Midlothian Community Planning Partnership (neighbourhood planning/community development trusts) to monitor the effectiveness of the Strategy;
 -  include a comprehensive number of organisations and interests in the development of planning policy through the MLDP process;
 -  consider mechanisms to address sites not identified in the Open Space Audit;
 -  identify and maximise potential funding sources; and
 -  include a wide ranging list of organisations and interests in future reviews of the Strategy.
33. Planned development and unexpected windfall development (including regeneration schemes) can introduce additional demand for open space and result in a need for new and/or improved open spaces. It also raises questions about the quality and accessibility of existing spaces. In some cases new development may also result in the loss of some spaces and displacement of facilities and have an adverse impact on local amenity. Where a need is generated by development proposals, the Council will seek

contributions from developers (in accordance with the current and any future reviews of the development plan and Supplementary Guidance) towards new or enhanced facilities (including town centre improvements).

34. The Council will:

-  ensure Best Value in maintaining and developing the open space network;
-  maximise external funding sources/opportunities;
-  identify and secure developer contributions for open space provision and maintenance (including town centre improvements) where development gives rise to a need; and
-  investigate third sector and Community Planning Partnership initiatives to support and maintain the open space network.

Management

35. The Council acknowledges that a robust management framework is essential to ensure successful implementation, promotion, monitoring and review of the Strategy. The Council established a multi-disciplinary project team (from across Council services) to prepare the Strategy, reflecting the diverse and interdependent nature of the open space agenda.










36. In addition to the MLDP, the Strategy seeks to inform and develop links with and between:

-  Midlothian Corporate Asset Management Plan;
-  Community Planning Sustainable Growth Thematic Group;
-  Midlothian Local Transport Strategy;
-  emerging Sport, Leisure and Physical Activity Strategy;
-  Midlothian Sports Pitch Needs Assessment;
-  Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan;
-  Midlothian Access Strategy;
-  Single Midlothian Plan and neighbourhood plans

Publicity and Promotion

37. The Council is keen to maximise the benefits and opportunities arising from the provision of open spaces and to ensure people are aware of and actively use the open spaces within their locality and across Midlothian. It acknowledges that there is not a “one size fits all” approach to the delivery of high quality open spaces but aims to provide for a range of users and activities.

38. The Strategy seeks to:

-  promote the importance and benefits of high quality open space;
-  encourage people to use open space(s);
-  make open space accessible;
-  promote a sense of pride in open spaces;
-  engage with communities and interest groups, including the emergent community sport hubs, to identify needs and aspirations;
-  identify underperforming spaces and take action to regenerate them, where possible;
-  promote multi-functional spaces;
-  promote connectivity with and between existing and new spaces; and
-  promote a partnership approach to maintaining and improving open spaces.

DELIVERY

39. A successful Strategy will deliver quantifiable improvements to Midlothian's open spaces; in particular, the quality and accessibility of existing spaces but also new spaces as a consequence of permitted development.
40. The measure of that success will lie in adopting a pragmatic approach to achieving outcomes and in developing partnerships with bodies and agencies with the skills and resources to make a difference. The examples highlighted in appendix 2 show the different ways in which partnership working already occurs in Midlothian. The Midlothian Community Engagement Strategy has a key role to play in assisting with the delivery of the Open Space Strategy, providing best practice guidance on community engagement.
41. In the current economic climate significant improvements to existing open spaces have been secured via external funding sources with approximately 30 key public open spaces improved significantly over the last five years. As a consequence of developer contributions arising from new development, new public spaces have been created to serve the needs of these developments or improvements have been made to nearby existing amenity. The emergence of the Central Scotland Green Network, supported through the National Planning Framework and the South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan, may see further opportunities and funding mechanisms for improving open spaces in the area. The MLDP, in providing the policy framework for the Midlothian Green Network and specific proposals to promote its delivery, will be accompanied by an Action Programme which will identify green network projects and the responsible parties for completing these actions.



Monitoring and Evaluation

42. Progress on delivery of the Strategy will be monitored by a Council working group. The Council's Planning Policy & Environment and Land & Countryside Services are the lead services for the Strategy and will be responsible for preparing progress reports and updates on the Strategy and Action Plan as required.
43. The Strategy will be formally reviewed in line with the MLDP process (which is every five years) in order to respond to policy change or other circumstances that affect the overall provision of open space in Midlothian. The timescale for MLDP reviews is outlined in the Development Plan Scheme for Midlothian (prepared annually). The strategy will be reviewed with reference to the Corporate Asset Management Plan and medium term financial plan. In addition public perception and/or satisfaction in respect of open space provision will be monitored (and reported to the working group) every three years via a customer survey managed by Midlothian's Commercial Operations.

The Action Plan

44. To be effective, it is essential that this Strategy is accompanied by an Action Plan to ensure and enable the translation of policy into action and activity in communities.
45. The Action Plan is divided into the four main themes of the Strategy under which sit objectives relating to the theme. Each objective is described and given a priority status of high, medium or low along with the means of how it will be achieved and by whom. Relevant aspects of the Action Plan will be used to inform the development of the Action Programme prepared in conjunction with the MLDP to promote the delivery of its policies and proposals.

ACTION PLAN – Theme 1 Protection & Enhancement

Ref	Action	Timescale/By	Delivery ¹	Resource Implications
Protection and Enhancement				
1	Midlothian Local Development Plan (MLDP) Preparation, adoption and publication of plan:  Main Issues Report consultation  Prepare MLDP Proposed Plan	1 May – 31 August 2013 Spring 2014	PP&E/L&C/PS/ DM/Key Agencies/ Local communities	Existing resources
2	Supplementary Guidance (SG) Review requirements for SG/option to adopt strategy as SG.	In line with MLDP programme	As above	Existing resources
3	Establish Midlothian Green Network Define and develop the Green Network. Collaborate with SNH, FC, & SESplan partners to agree greenspace hierarchy and network at SDP and LDP levels ensuring consistency between local and regional audit data, definitions & descriptions.	In line with MLDP programme	PP&E/L&CS/PS/ DM/L&FG/ Key Agencies/ Local communities	Existing resources
4	Formal Greenspace Provide high quality areas for sports by improving sports pitches in accordance with development of community sport hubs plans.	As per Sports & Leisure Services Business Plan (sports hub plans)	S&L	External funding contingent on grant award.
5	Play Provision Provide improvement to quality of play provision for all users. Undertake outdoor play equipment improvements as part of funding applications and developer contributions.	As above	L&CS	Contingent on project funding/ developer contributions.

Note – ¹ Abbreviations used are explained in appendix 4

ACTION PLAN – Theme 1 Protection & Enhancement

Ref	Action	Timescale/By	Delivery ¹	Resource Implications
Protection and Enhancement				
6	Biodiversity Improve management of Council-owned Countryside Sites. Ensure all Council-owned Listed Biodiversity Sites are managed appropriately.	Annual review	L&CS	Existing resources
7	Green Flag Sites Maintain and manage existing green flag sites to continue to meet award standards and increase the number of candidate sites as resources allow.	Annually	L&CS	Existing resources
8	Woodland Management Implement all woodland management plans.	Annual/For duration of the Strategy	L&CS	Existing resources
9	Tree & Woodland Safety Undertake tree and woodland safety surveys in accordance with National Tree Safety Group guidance.	Every 3 years	L&CS	Existing resources

Note – ¹ Abbreviations used are explained in appendix 4

ACTION PLAN – Theme 2 Partnership & Resource

Ref	Action	Timescale	Delivery ¹	Resource Implications
Partnership & Resource				
1	Partnership Projects Outline areas where opportunities for partnership working exist as part of ongoing monitoring of Strategy. Prioritise open space projects and funding opportunities with external partners including Community Planning Partnership.	For the duration of the strategy	L&CS/PP&E/RSPT	Existing resources/ External funding.
2	Straiton Bing Review actions from Cabinet report (August 2009) in light of emerging MLDP proposals for A701 realignment and Straiton commercial hub/Midlothian Gateway.	In line with MLDP programme – Spring 2014	L&CS/PP&E	Existing resources
3	Esk Valley Partnership Review Heritage Lottery Fund bid in conjunction with East Lothian, SNH, and Edinburgh.	Spring/ Summer 2014	EVP/L&CS	External funds up to £2.5m
4	Developer Contributions Establish framework for developer contributions to provide clarity on open space requirements in new developments. Incorporate new standards into MLDP.	In line with MLDP programme - Spring 2014	DM/PP&E/PS/ L&CS/DM	Existing resources
5	Maintenance Review policy of maintenance obligations consequent on new development. Clarify management and maintenance requirements for play provision for privately owned public open spaces.	In line with MLDP programme - Spring 2014	L&CS/DM/PP&E	Existing resources

Note – ¹ Abbreviations used are explained in appendix 4

ACTION PLAN – Theme 2 Partnership & Resource

Ref	Action	Timescale	Deliver ¹	Resource Implications
Partnership & Resource				
6	L&FGN Partnership Establish Green Network Action Plan for Midlothian. Produce report detailing achievements and workplan for the next five years.	Spring 2014	L&FGNP	Existing resources
7	Community Involvement Develop and support community involvement in open space development and management. Support local groups in developing, managing, maintaining local green spaces.	For duration of the strategy	L&CS	Existing resources
8	Volunteer Opportunities Continue to develop volunteer opportunities at countryside and other sites. Annual report on the number of site improvements and number of volunteer hours.	For duration of the Strategy	L&CS	Existing resources
9	Midlothian Paths Group Upgrade and improve local path networks. Report on the projects completed by the paths group in maintaining paths and opening new routes.	For duration of the Strategy	L&CS	Existing resources

Note – ¹ Abbreviations used are explained in appendix 4

ACTION PLAN – Theme 3 Management

Ref	Action	Timescale	Delivery ¹	Resource Implications
Management				
1	Sustainable Management Practices Develop greener cutting regimes for key open spaces in consultation.	Spring/ Summer 2014	L&CS	Existing resources
2	Dog Fouling Continue with the development and delivery of the Zero-Tolerance Campaign particularly developing community engagement.	For duration of the strategy	EH	Existing resources
3	Open Space Audit Develop protocol for review and update of Open Space Audit. Undertake interim biennial updates (desktop) of spatial data and spreadsheet data & full review of Audit & Strategy every 5 years.	Biennially. In line with MLDP review.	PP&E/L&CS	Existing staff resource/ Consultants/ Third sector.
4	Local Smaller Green Spaces Obtain Council approval to identify and audit all relevant open spaces between 0.2 and 0.4 hectares to enable assessment of local greenspace provision.	Autumn 2014	L&CS/PP&E/EST/ PS	Subject to approval as spend to save
5	Benchmarking Continue to benchmark nationally with other greenspace management authorities as part of ongoing monitoring of strategy. Assess standards of efficiency and effectiveness of management practices.	For duration of the strategy	L&CS	Existing staff resources

Note – ¹ Abbreviations used are explained in appendix 4

ACTION PLAN – Theme 3 Management

Ref	Action	Timescale	Delivery ¹	Resource Implications
Management				
6	Training and Skills Improve the skills of Council staff, volunteers and trainees. Ensure Council staff and trainees are aware of the Open Space Strategy and its objectives and to align training to meet standards required. Provide ongoing initiatives and skills training to volunteers to support the improvement of the greenspace network.	Ongoing/ For duration of the strategy	L&CS	Existing staff resources

Note – ¹ Abbreviations used are explained in appendix 4

ACTION PLAN – Theme 4 Publicity and Promotion

Ref	Action	Timescale	Delivery ¹	Resource Implications
Publicity & Promotion				
1	Tourism Promote opportunities for tourism through use of Midlothian's greenspace and Natural Heritage.	For duration of the strategy	ED/L&CS	Existing resources
2	Council Events Continue to provide an 'events to education' and outdoor sports programme across key sites for the public.	For duration of the strategy	L&CS/S&L	Existing resources
3	Community Events/Activities Develop and promote sites for use by community groups and other organisations providing advice and guidance on managing events & educational activities.	For duration of the strategy	L&CS/S&L	Existing resources
4	Management Rules Promote responsible use of public open spaces including woodlands. Develop management rules for key open spaces in consultation with key stakeholders including Dog Warden, Police, and Waste Services.	Spring 2015	L&CS	Existing resources
5	Signage Provision Review existing signage provision to improve the appearance and management of open spaces.	For duration of the strategy	L&CS	Existing resources

Note – ¹ Abbreviations used are explained in appendix 4

ACTION PLAN – Theme 4 Publicity and Promotion

Ref	Action	Timescale	Delivery ¹	Resource Implications
Publicity & Promotion				
6	Disability Discrimination Act Encourage the use of open spaces for all abilities. Ensure the needs of all users are taken into account in the management and improvement of greenspace.	For duration of the strategy	RT/SU	Existing resources
7	Awareness Raising Health, environment and quality of life issues associated with quality greenspace. Continue to interpret through a range of media key sites for the benefit of the public.	For duration of the strategy	S&L/L&CS/PP&E/DM	Existing resources
8	Open Space Strategy Use communications and community forums to promote greenspace initiatives.	For duration of the strategy	RT/L&CS	Existing resources
9	Healthy Living Report on achievements to encourage healthy living by Ranger Service, Outdoor Learning, Ageing Well and MAC.	Spring 2014	L&CS/S&L/CS	Existing resources

Note – ¹ Abbreviations used are explained in appendix 4

Appendix 1 – Types of Open Space in Midlothian

Type	Description
Public Parks and Gardens	Areas of land normally enclosed, designed, constructed, managed and maintained as a public park or garden
Private Gardens or Grounds	Areas of land normally enclosed and associated with a house or institution and reserved for private use.
Amenity Green Space	Landscape areas providing visual amenity or separating different buildings providing informal recreational activities and general environmental benefits
Play Space for Children and Teenagers	Areas providing safe and accessible opportunities for teenagers and children's play, usually linked to housing areas
Sports Areas	Large and generally flat areas of grassland or specifically designed surfaces used primarily for designated sports (including playing fields, golf courses, tennis courts and bowling greens)
Green Corridors	Routes including river corridors and old railway lines, linking different areas within a town or city as part of designated or managed network and used for walking, cycling, or linking towns and cities to their surrounding countryside or country parks
Natural Semi-Natural Greenspace	Areas of undeveloped or previously developed land with residual natural habitats or which have been planted or colonized by vegetation or wildlife including woodlands and wetlands
Other Functional Greenspace	Allotments, churchyards, cemeteries, school grounds, golf courses.
Civic Space	Squares, streets, waterfront and promenades predominantly of hard landscaping that provides a focus for pedestrian activity and can make connections for people and for wildlife
Development Site	A site identified for development in the Midlothian Local Plan or subject of a planning application but which includes greenspace(s).

Appendix 2 – Open Space Projects

Example 1 - Roslin Park

In 2009 the Roslin Community Voices Network made representation to the Council for improvements to the main park in the village. Consultation was undertaken with local groups and the key elements developed into a plan which included upgrade to the play area, a new seating design, ornamental tree planting, tarmac paths and entrance improvements to make the site more welcoming. Funding was obtained from a landfill tax fund and the project completed in February 2011.



Before



After

Example 2 – Springfield Mill

In 2005 the Springfield Mill Action Group (SMAG) obtained funds to transform Springfield Mill from a former industrial site to a green space. The Council re-developed the site as a green space with these funds in partnership with SMAG. Subsequently a host of volunteer groups as well SMAG has helped to further improve the site to achieve a Green Flag Scheme Award.



Before



After

Example 3 – Woodburn Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)

Planned housing development can result in the need for new or enhanced provision of facilities within communities. In these circumstances developer contributions can assist in this process. An example of this is in the Woodburn area of Dalkeith where a new facility was required for the football teams. Following a tender process, the Council's Land and Countryside Section designed and built the new facility resulting in a very high quality all weather football pitch within the park.



Before



After

Example 4 – Jarnac Court

Dalkeith town centre has recently been subject to two phases of public realm improvements jointly funded by the council and its partners. The first phase was completed in 2011. The second phase is an improvement to the civic space located within Jarnac Court and includes refurbished street furniture and re-surfacing of pedestrian areas with high quality paving materials reflecting materials used in the improvements to the High Street. The scheme was subject to thorough public consultation as part of the project delivery process



Before



After

Example 5 – Cornbank Woodland

Cornbank Woodland was a project undertaken in conjunction with the local school which is adjacent to this 5 hectare woodland in the centre of one of Penicuik's main residential areas. This once popular green space had become neglected and underused and there was community support to undertake improvements to make the woodland more accessible and attractive for all users. Local school children helped to shape the improvements and a gate on the school boundary was installed to facilitate more environmental education. The woodland and path works were completed in early 2012 resulting in a much improved greenspace within the heart of Penicuik.



Before



After

Appendix 3 – Glossary of Terms

Term	Description
Action Plan	The supporting document to the open space strategy which identifies a series of actions, timescales and resources to implement the strategy.
Amenity	The general aesthetic character and visual quality pertaining to and/or present in a given location or site.
Cabinet	The main decision making body of the Council.
Central Scotland Green Network	A strategic network of woodland and other habitats, active travel routes, greenspace links, watercourses and waterways, providing an enhanced setting for development and other land uses and improved opportunities for outdoor recreation and cultural activity. This is a national project identified in NPF2.
Community Development Trust	A community owned and led vehicle (with charitable status) aimed at bringing about long-term social and environmental improvements to local communities.
Neighbourhood Planning Programme	Community Planning led initiative promoting greater community involvement over service delivery at a local level.
Developer Contributions	Contributions provided by developers to the Council for the provision of infrastructure and/or community facilities required as a result of proposed development.
ELSP 2015	The Edinburgh and the Lothians Structure Plan 2105. The strategic element of the statutory development plan covering the City of Edinburgh and the landward Lothian authorities (the Midlothian Local Plan makes up the local component of the development plan (for Midlothian).
Fields in Trust/FIT	A charitable trust established to protect and promote playing fields and open space. It replaces the former National Playing Fields Association (NPFA)
Forestry Commission Scotland	The Government agency charged with the promotion and development of forestry in Scotland.
GIS	Geographic Information System – software system enabling the digital creation and transfer of geographic information as well as electronic and paper output of mapped information.
Green Flag Award Scheme	A benchmarking standards scheme for parks and green spaces in the UK. Managed by Keep Britain Tidy and Keep Scotland Tidy.
Greenspace Network	The range and type of open spaces identified in the Midlothian Open Space Audit.

Term	Description
Greenspace Scotland	A charitable trust charged with the promotion, protection and development of open space in Scotland.
Midlothian Community Planning Partnership	The collective term given to the various groups and agencies involved in Midlothian's Community Plan.
Midlothian Local Development Plan/MLDP	The replacement statutory development plan for the Midlothian Local Plan. The MLDP will form the local element of the statutory development plan for Midlothian, the strategic element being provided by the South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan.
Midlothian Local Plan	The current adopted local plan for Midlothian.
Midlothian Voluntary Action	A registered charity created to support and develop community and third sector organisations in Midlothian and to facilitate effective representation of the voluntary sector in partnership working, particularly through the Community Planning Partnership.
National Planning Framework 2	The second version of the national development framework for the long term development of Scotland's towns, cities and countryside. Unlike NPF1, NPF2 is statutory.
NPFA	National Playing Fields Association – a charitable trust responsible for the protection and promotion of playing fields and open spaces in the UK.
Open space	Term defined by Greenspace Scotland as – <i>Open, usually green land within and on the edges of settlements. Parks, public gardens, allotments, woodland, play areas, playing fields, green corridors and paths, burial grounds, natural areas, institutional land as well as 'civic space' such as squares or other paved or hard surfaced areas with a civic function are all forms of open space.</i>
Open space audit	The process by which open spaces are mapped, surveyed and assessed.
Open space typology	A list of generic types of space categorised by the Government and outlined in PAN65 – see below
Planning Advice Note (PAN)	Government statement of advice and guidance on good practice.
Roslin Community Voices Network	Community action group.
Scottish Planning Policy	Statement of Scottish Government planning policy.
South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan/SESplan	The replacement statutory development plan covering Edinburgh City, the Lothians, South Fife and Scottish Borders local government boundaries.

Term	Description
Springfield Mill Action Group	Community action group.
Supplementary Planning Guidance/SPG	Guidance over and above the contents of the local plan which provides more detail (than would be acceptable to be included in the plan), information and guidance on how planning policy will be implemented.
Supplementary Guidance (replaces SPG by virtue of the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006)	Similar to above plus statutory guidance adopted in connection with a plan, forms part of the development plan.
Windfall development	Development proposals promoted through planning applications rather than through the development plan process.
WREN	Waste Recycling Environmental ltd – A not for profit business that helps benefit the lives of people who live close to landfill sites by awarding grants for community, conservation and heritage projects.

Appendix 4 – Abbreviations Used

Abbreviation	Description
APSE	Association for Public Service Excellence
CS	Children's Services
CSGN	Central Scotland Green Network
DM	Development Management (service section of the Council)
ED	Economic Development (service section of the Council)
EH	Environmental Health (service section of the Council)
EST	Estates (service section of the Council)
EVP	Esk Valley Partnership
FiT	Fields in Trust
GI	Geographic Information
L&CS	Land & Countryside Services (service section of the Council)
L&FGNP	Lothians and Fife Green Network Partnership
MAC	Midlothian Active Choices
MBP	Midlothian Biodiversity Partnership
MLDP	Midlothian Local Development Plan
NPF2	National Planning Framework 2
PAN65	Planning Advice Note 65
PP&E	Planning Policy and Environment (service section of the Council)
PS	Property Strategy (service section of the Council)
RSPT	Regeneration and Social Policy Team (service section of the Council)
S&L	Sport and Leisure (service section of the Council)
SOA	Single Outcome Agreement
SG	Supplementary Guidance
SPP	Scottish Planning Policy